Men-at-Arms

OSPREY PUBLISHING

Norwegian Waffen-SS Legion, 1941–43

Massimiliano Afiero • Illustrated by Ramiro Bujeiro

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3
- Norway in 1940–41 – The Finnish dimension – Summary of deployment

BACKGROUND: *THE NASJONAL SAMLING* 5
- Quisling's pre-war career – Invasion and occupation – The Germanic SS in Norway

THE *FREIWILLIGEN LEGIONEN* 7
- Norwegian volunteers in mixed SS units – *Den Norske Legion/ Freiwilligen Legion Norwegen*

TRAINING 11
- Organization – National tensions – Changes of command – Order of battle – Insignia

THE EASTERN FRONT, 1942–43 15
- Emergency deployment by air – Into the front line, February–March 1942 – The Uritsk sector, April 1942 – Patrol warfare, and enemy response – Recognition, May 1942 – Innovations: Bad Tölz – Norwegian SS Police Company

THE WINTER BATTLES, 1942–43 36
- Soviet attacks of November–December 1942 – New Year battles – The anti-tank gunners at Mga and Krasny Bor – Homecoming and disbandment

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 42

PLATE COMMENTARIES 43

INDEX 48

Men-at-Arms • 524

Norwegian Waffen-SS Legion, 1941–43

Massimiliano Afiero • Illustrated by Ramiro Bujeiro

Series editor Martin Windrow

NORWEGIAN WAFFEN-SS LEGION, 1941–43

INTRODUCTION

Norway in 1940–41

On Sunday, 22 June 1941, millions of German troops and their allies crossed the western borders of the USSR on fronts that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, thus initiating the most titanic struggle of World War II. When the first German radio bulletins reached occupied Western Europe they prompted considerable enthusiasm in some quarters, and demonstrations of support were organized immediately. Moreover, the political parties sympathetic to the Axis cause quickly opened recruiting offices, and thousands of men soon decided to leave their occupied but relatively safe countries for an uncertain future fighting on the Eastern Front.

Although the country shared a frontier with the USSR in the Arctic north, nothing had seemed to presage that this wave of enthusiasm would infect Norway, a peaceful and peace-loving nation of only 3 million inhabitants, which historically had not suffered wars since the Napoleonic period. The German invasion of April 1940 – to prevent Anglo-French intervention to block German access to strategic materials from neutral Sweden – had been resisted for 62 days (longer than in any other nation subjected to Germany's 1939–40 Blitzkreig), at a cost of 1,700 Norwegian casualties from roughly 25,000 troops. Nevertheless, the most prolonged fighting had taken place in thinly inhabited regions, causing few civilian casualties and little urban destruction, and in the year that followed the population had become accustomed to the presence of the German military. The occupation, headed by Reichskommissar Josef Terboven, was not particularly onerous.

After the invasion the previously weak National Unity movement – *Nasjonal Samling* (NS), launched in 1933 by Vidkun Quisling – became much more visible, growing from fewer than 6,000 members in 1939 to some 45,000 by mid-1942. While pro-German, the NS had not assisted the invasion, and although he made a public bid for power at that time its self-styled *Fører* ('Leader') Quisling was

not in fact appointed by the Germans as 'Minister-President' of Norway until February 1942.

The Norwegian Communist Party had had equally little impact on society, and the nearby Russo-Finnish 'Winter War' of November 1939–March 1940 had naturally aroused apprehension and anti-Soviet hostility. In June 1941 significant numbers of Norwegians considered that the time had come to participate in the 'crusade against Bolshevism' that had been unleashed in the East. During the 1930s governments of the left had carried out a demilitarization programme which some officers had found humiliating; this feeling was naturally exacerbated by defeat in April–June 1940, and a number of them now saw an opportunity to restore Norway's military honour. In the days following the launch of Operation 'Barbarossa' the Norwegian press began to print lists of officers who had joined a movement to send a Legion of volunteers to the Finnish front: in just a week, 20 per cent of Norwegian officers (445 out of 2,000) had signed up.

The Finnish dimension

With the support of Quisling's Nasjonal Samling, a group of officers led by the elderly Col Finn Hanibal Kjelstrup opened a recruiting office in Oslo, and on 4 July Quisling addressed a large gathering in the capital's University Square. He urged the necessity of fighting Bolshevism, by collaborating in the war effort which Finland had now joined against its Soviet conquerors and part-occupiers, and his appeal was echoed by the Finnish delegate to Norway. It should be understood that the prevailing motive behind the volunteer movement was not enthusiasm for Nazi Germany but rather solidarity with Finland, which was stressed in all the official appeals for volunteers to join the Norwegian Legion. To promote the enlistment campaign a poster by the NS artist Harald Damsleth, a badge for sale to the public, and a commemorative stamp issued by the Norwegian Post Office to raise funds for the Legion all linked the flags of Norway and Finland. Although it was affiliated to the Waffen-SS, within the Legion the Norwegian language was used, Norwegian officers maintained their ranks, NS political leaders were integrated as non-commissioned officers, and the songs and hymns were Norwegian.

The Finnish flag is shown below that of Norway in this stamp issued by the Norwegian Post Office in 1941 to publicize and raise funds for the recruitment drive for the Norwegian Legion. (Author's collection)

Summary of deployment

From 15 December 1941 a Norwegian Army cavalry officer, Maj Arthur Quist, took over as commander of the unit or *Legionsführer*, with the equivalent SS Legionary rank of *Legions-Sturmbannführer*. To enable the unit to be employed on a German front a liaison staff (*Verbingdungsstab*) was added to the Legion, which led to some conflicts with nationalist Norwegian officers. After completing the necessary training, in February 1942 the Legion was deployed to the Leningrad front, where the fighting was mainly positional. The Norwegians were engaged in difficult and exhausting trench warfare for a long year, until they were withdrawn in the spring of 1943.

In May 1943 the Legion was dissolved; some volunteers returned home, but perhaps half the survivors chose to join the reorganized SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment 23 'Norge' of the new 11. SS-Freiwilligen-Panzergrenadier-Division 'Nordland' which had been authorized that March. Thereafter the 'Norge' regiment continued to

fight the Red Army until the end of the war. One small remnant was destroyed in the final battle of Berlin on the night of 1/2 May 1945, and a larger element, attached to the 5. SS-Pz-Div 'Wiking', surrendered in Czechoslovakia on 8 May.

On their return home, the survivors of the nearly 2,000 volunteers who had served in the Legion (and the many Norwegian nurses who had served in Russia) were widely regarded as traitors. Their commander was jailed, and they suffered social ostracism; in some cases their families broke off relations with them, and their children were expelled from school. The war had become very different in the years since they had hopefully volunteered to take part in Finland's fight for freedom.

A volunteer of *Den Norske Legion* in autumn 1941, wearing a blank right collar patch on a field-grey German tunic. Photos of Legion junior ranks in Russia show simultaneous use of this, the lion-and-axe patch (rarely), and occasionally even the SS runes, and these variations do not seem to have any official significance. The authorized insignia of the unit were slow to be distributed, and it seems logical that the lion-and-axe patch would be more common among later replacements than the original personnel. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

BACKGROUND: THE *NASJONAL SAMLING*

Quisling's pre-war career

Throughout Europe, the 1917 Bolshevik coup in Russia and its threat of exporting revolution provoked the formation of right-wing political movements to resist this danger; Norway was no exception, and disparate organizations emerged in the 1920s. However, the movement that most influenced the formation of the future *Norske Legion* was the Nasjonal Samling founded by Vidkun Quisling in 1933.

The son of a Lutheran pastor, Quisling was born in Fyresdal in July 1887. In 1905 (the year when Norway separated from the union under the Swedish crown which had lasted since 1814) he entered the Norwegian military academy. Promoted lieutenant in 1908, as a specialist in Russian matters he was appointed a military attaché in St Petersburg in 1917, when he was one of the foreign witnesses to the Revolution. In 1921 he became secretary to the famous Norwegian explorer Fridjof Nansen, who was sent by the League of Nations to carry out humanitarian work in Russia. Quisling spent two years in Ukraine, and married a Russian woman; he later became a member of the Norwegian legation in Moscow, and returned home only at the end of 1929, having reached the rank of major. An implacable enemy of Bolshevism, he decided to found a party to promote an international 'awakening' of the Nordic peoples, the *Nordisk Folkereisning* ('Nordic Popular Regeneration').

In 1931 he entered parliamentary politics, accepting the position of Minister of Defence offered him by the head of the Agrarian Party, but he soon resigned. In May 1933 Quisling created his new party, the Nasjonal Samling. This gave birth to various sections, each called a *Hird*, and was characterized by a lively Christian nationalism; it took for its insignia a version of the old symbol of St Olaf (the king who had Christianized Norway) – red, with a circled yellow cross. Quisling proclaimed himself Fører, and created within the NS a paramilitary section modelled on the German Sturmabteilung (SA); this was titled the *Rikshird,* and its seven regional 'regiments' (much smaller than that military term implies) paraded and saluted in the fascist manner.

In the elections of 1933 the Nasjonal Samling gained only some 30,000 votes – more than the Communists, but still only 2 per cent of the electorate. This showing did not improve three years later, although Quisling was able to attract influential public figures including career officers, professors, state officials, pastors and writers. On the eve of

Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945), founder and leader of the *Nasjonal Samling* movement from 1933, and Minister-President of Norway from February 1942 under the German occupation. After the liberation he was convicted of treason, and executed by firing squad on 24 October 1945. He did leave one legacy: his surname became a synonym for 'traitor to one's country'. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

World War II the NS still had only between 5,000 and 6,000 active militants; consequently, the German Nazi regime did not consider Quisling a worthwhile contact. In order to reverse this opinion, in December 1939 Quisling went to Berlin, where he was granted meetings with Hitler and the chief Nazi ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg. During these talks the Norwegian politician openly invited the Germans to 'protect' Norway from a possible Allied invasion, assuring them that any occupation would be a walkover enjoying maximum collaboration from his countrymen. This would prove to be over-optimistic.

Invasion and occupation

The idea of invading neutral Denmark and Norway (Operation 'Weserübung') was already part of German strategic plans, and the Allies were also planning to intervene in Norway. On 16 February 1940 British warships violated Norwegian territorial waters to rescue prisoners held on the German auxiliary merchant ship *Altmark*, and from the beginning of April they started laying mines off the coast to interfere with German shipping. On 9 April, when an Anglo-French-Free Polish expeditionary corps was about to sail, German troops landed in Norway and seized all the main ports including the capital, Oslo. The Allied forces landed on 15–18 April, but the operation was badly bungled throughout, and they were forced to withdraw from southern and central Norway at the beginning of May; only at Narvik in the north did they manage to hold out, with Norwegian troops, until the beginning of June.

Immediately after the German occupation of Oslo, Quisling broadcast to the nation, urging the cessation of all resistance and proclaiming himself head of the government; he was disowned by King Haakon, who called him a traitor. The Norwegian armed forces were only partially mobilized; some surrendered quickly, others retreated into neutral Sweden, but the last elements resisted until 10 June, and overall they inflicted three times the number of casualties they suffered. The bulk of the Navy sailed to England, taking the king to form a government in exile. On 15 April the Germans installed Reichskommissar Terboven, who formed the so-called High Administrative Council (later, Council of State), including some members of the Nasjonal Samling but not Quisling himself. It was not until February 1942 that Terboven decided to install Quisling as head the puppet government.

A young member of Quisling's bodyguard company, the *Førergarden,* wearing its dark blue 'gala' uniform with white trimmings. The collar patches show a white NS eagle-and-cross over an angular monogram 'VQ', as also worn on the left sleeve of the service uniform – see Plate A3. (Courtesy Hugh Page Taylor Collection)

The Germanic SS in Norway

Following the occupation of the 'Germanic' European countries, Reichsführer-SS Himmler planned to create local organizations

modelled on the German Allgemeine-SS. At the beginning of April 1941, Quisling learnt of an SS project to create a Norwegian branch (Norges-SS/*Norske-SS*) using cadres from the Nasjonal Samling, especially militants of the Rikshird who were sympathetic to Pan-Germanism. Wishing to preserve his party's independence, Quisling was unenthusiastic, so Himmler turned to his acquaintance Jonas Lie, Minister of Police in the puppet government. In April, the ex-soldier Lie volunteered as an observer and war correspondent to the premier Waffen-SS regiment, the 'Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler', on Germany's Balkan front. Following that campaign (and awards of the Iron Cross 2nd Class and captain's rank in the Waffen-SS), the impressed and flattered Lie met with Himmler to discuss the Norwegian SS project, and on his return home he presented the plan to senior comrades in the Police Department and to Quisling. To ensure that a Norwegian SS had a strong nationalist base, it was decided to assign as head of the first contingent a fervent nationalist then commanding the NS's 7th Hird Regiment ('Viking') from the Greater Oslo region. Accounts are contradictory, but it seems that Lie then pressed ahead without keeping Quisling informed.

The first volunteers for the Norwegian Germanic SS *(Norske-SS)* in late May 1941 were trained at Elverum wearing field-grey sidecaps and uniforms, with the addition of *Hird* insignia (see Plate B1): the NS eagle-and-cross badge on the left side of the cap, a black left-sleeve brassard with the Hird badge in yellow and red, and Hird rank on black SS shoulder straps. The field cap was the early SS-VT pattern, with a *Totenkopf* front button. (Courtesy Erik Norling Collection)

On 16 May 1941 all members of the 7th Hird Regt were summoned to the NS party headquarters in Oslo, where their *Regimenteører* Aslak Rönning Nesheim announced that Quisling had ordered him to select men to form a special armed unit for his personal protection. A few days later, about 150 selected men received German field-grey uniform but with Rikshird insignia. The volunteers were required to take an oath of loyalty to both Adolf Hitler as Führer of Germany and to Quisling as Fører of Norway. Himmler himself travelled to Oslo to greet the new members, and to name Jonas Lie '*Den Norske SS-Fører*' ('Leader of the Norwegian SS').

The volunteers were sent on a three-week training course at Elverum in northern Oslo, starting on 26 May. However, when they were due to return home on 15 June they were held back, and on the 20th both Quisling and Lie visited the camp to reassure their protesting countrymen. This episode ended on 22 June, with the news of the outbreak of war on the Eastern Front. Unsurprisingly, most of the Elverum trainees quickly expressed their willingness to join the Norwegian Volunteer Legion. After this mass exodus the organization of the Norges-SS practically ceased, to be resumed only in July 1942 under the new title Germanske SS Norge ('Germanic SS Norway').

THE *FREIWILLIGEN LEGIONEN*

The German propaganda machine strove to present the invasion of the USSR as a pre-emptive attack to defend European civilization against an imminent threat from expansionist Soviet barbarism. Already or almost immediately joined by its allies Italy, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia, the Third Reich sought to harness enthusiasm in occupied Europe to further internationalize the war in the East, organizing recruiting centres for so-called *Freiwilligen Legionen* ('Legions

Minister of Police Jonas Lie, who was appointed by Himmler to head the Germanic SS in Norway, here wearing the insignia of a Hird *Regimentefører* apparently on a German Army M1935 tunic with dark green collar facing. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

of Volunteers'). Exhibitions, conferences and events were organized to gather support for the new 'crusade against Bolshevism', and above all to encourage voluntary recruitment for military service. The recruitment of foreign personnel by the Germans was not new; since the beginning of the war the Wehrmacht in general and the Waffen-SS in particular had opened their ranks first to *Volksdeutschen* (foreign citizens of German origin and language), and then to individual volunteers of 'Germanic' origin – Swiss, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Flemish.

The formation of the new 'Germanic' volunteer units from Denmark, Norway, Holland and Flanders (Dutch-speaking Belgium) was overseen by the SS -Führungs-Hauptamt ('SS Leadership Main Office', SS-FHA), while those from France, Wallonia (French-speaking Belgium) and Croatia were organized by the Wehrmacht High Command. All uniforms and equipment would be supplied from German stocks; the foreign volunteers of the SS Legions would wear partial SS insignia, with the addition of sleeve patches in their national colours and distinctive cuffbands, and their ranks were prefixed with the word '*Legions*' rather than '*SS*' to differentiate them from members of the true German SS.

Norwegian volunteers in mixed SS units

On 20 April 1940 – just 11 days after Denmark's surrender, and while Germany and the USSR were still bound by their non-aggression pact – an official communiqué invited young Danes to enlist in a new Waffen-SS Regiment 'Nordland'. Subsequent attempts to also attract Norwegians to its ranks initially met with little success, and on 5 December 1940 Quisling travelled to Berlin at German request to discuss this with Gottlob Berger, the recruiting chief at the SS-FHA. When Quisling confirmed his support, Berger ordered his subordinate in the Netherlands, Paul Dahm, to go immediately to Oslo and animate the campaign. On 12 January 1941, Quisling spoke on Norwegian radio to encourage recruitment for the regiment 'in the name of the war for freedom and independence against the English world despotism' (a threat which must have sounded odd to most Norwegians). On 28 January, Himmler flew to Oslo to inspect Norwegian volunteers.

Propaganda poster by the artist Harald Damsleth for the 1942 *Germanske SS Norge;* note the 'sunwheel' collar patch – see Plate B2.

In December 1940 the 'Nordland' Regt had been officially integrated into the new motorized SS-Division 'Germania', almost immediately renamed SS-Div 'Wiking'. Its other two regiments were the German 'Germania' and the nominally Dutch-Flemish 'Westland'. It should be noted that these ostensibly foreign regiments were actually mixed, with a majority of Germans: a report in June 1941 gave SS-Div 'Wiking' only 421 Finns, 294 Norwegians and 216 Danes, in the latter two cases representing only two companies in nominally three-battalion regiments.

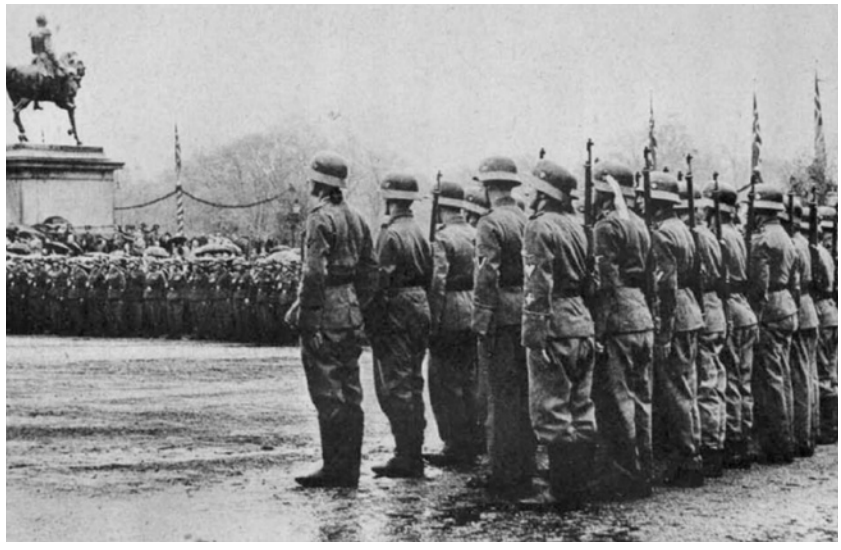
Den Norske Legion/Freiwilligen Legion Norwegen

In the days immediately following the start of Operation 'Barbarossa', Quisling and the other heads of the NS asked Reichskommissar Terboven for permission to form a specifically

Quisling and Reichskommissar Terboven presiding over a Hird parade in Oslo, 1942. The two men were obliged to cooperate, but they detested one another, and it was nine months after the German occupation before Terboven brought Quisling in to head the puppet Norwegian government. (Wartime magazine *Munin*).

Norwegian expeditionary force to fight alongside the Finns against the Soviets (see above, 'The Finnish dimension'). On 29 June 1941, Terboven responded with a speech on the radio: '… the main [question is not to choose] the side of England or Germany, the question is to choose Nordic culture or Asian Bolshevism … The Führer [has] accepted the request of the Norwegian people for the immediate formation of a Norwegian Legion'. The supportive Norwegian press echoed that the aim was to form 'a Norwegian legion that will participate in the fight against Bolshevism, in defence of Finland and the whole North'. The influx of

A prominently marked recruiting office for the Norwegian Legion in Oslo, summer 1941. (US National Archives/NARA)



The Norwegian Legion parading in Palace Square, Oslo, before being shipped to Germany for training at the beginning of August 1941. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

volunteers to the Oslo recruiting offices included veterans of both the Finnish 'Winter War' and the defence against the Germans.

As the first commander for *Den Norske Legion* (in German, the Freiwilligen Legion Norwegen), Quisling proposed the Nasjonal Samling's fervently nationalist and anti-communist Maj Finn Hanibal Kjelstrup. Appointed to head the Legion's central staff in Oslo, on 3 July Kjelstrup issued through the press an invitation to the Norwegian officer corps to enlist in the Legion: 'The decisive battle of Finland against Soviet Bolshevism has begun … We can show our sympathy for Finland … [by] sending a Norwegian military unit to participate in the battle for Nordic-Germanic culture, ensuring the freedom of Finland and our eastern border, together with Swedish and Danish volunteers … All compatriots who care for the homeland must join this honourable mission. The Norwegian Legion will receive *feldgrau* uniforms with Norwegian nationality badges … '. As already noted, more than 400 officers responded to this appeal, thus ensuring the necessary framework for volunteer training.

Legions-Sturmbannführer Jörgen Bakke, who commanded the Legion's 1st 'Viken' Battalion from July to December 1941. This photo taken that summer shows him wearing a German officer's service cap (insignia unclear), and German uniform with the Norwegian Army collar insignia for major's rank (a single star enclosed by a broad 'L' of silver-braid edging). He displays German SS major's shoulder straps, and the SS eagle-and-swastika on his left sleeve above a Norwegian flag patch. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

At the beginning of July, about 800 volunteers were assembled at the Norwegian Army base near the Bjölsen School in northern Oslo to begin training. After a medical examination, uniforms were issued – and to the surprise of the young Norwegians, they were those of the Waffen-SS, with the National Socialist eagle-and-swastika on the left sleeve. This gave rise to discontent, and some resignations: many volunteers had interpreted Kjelstrup's announcement to mean that they would be incorporated into the Finnish Army (in either case they could not wear Norwegian uniform, since Norway had not declared war on the USSR). As in the other European volunteer legions, national insignia were initially limited to a small Norwegian flag patch on the left sleeve below the SS eagle.

The Germans had intended to organize the Norwegian Legion as a reinforced infantry regiment in three battalions, titled 'Viken', 'Gula' and 'Frosta' after the 1st, 4th and 5th Regts of the NS Rikshird. For the time being, while awaiting a

sufficient number of volunteers, the 'Viken' Bn was formed under the command of Capt Jörgen Bakke, immediately promoted to the rank of major (Legions-Sturmbannführer). This first battalion included three rifle companies and a fourth heavy-weapons company with machine guns and mortars.

In mid-July 1941, Bakke was called to Berlin to confer with SS-Brigadeführer (SS-Brigaf – MajGen) Hans Jüttner, head of the operational command of the Waffen-SS at *SS*-FHA. At this meeting Bakke learned that the Legion was to be trained in Germany, and was offered its command – both being clear indications that the SS intended to bypass Kjelstrup's staff in Oslo and take total control of the unit. Meanwhile, Norwegian volunteers were transferred to the Gulskogen training camp south of Oslo, near Drammen. The 1st Company arrived there on 24 July under the command of Capt Henrik Brun. 'Iron Henry' ('*Jern-Henrik*'), a 46-year-old veteran who had fought on the Narvik front in 1940 at the head of 7th Co/Inf-Regt 51, immediately hoisted a Norwegian flag at the entrance to the camp; he would not last long in the Legion. The younger volunteers in his 1st Co came from the Nasjonal Samling youth wing, including the platoon leaders Björn Østring and Per Wang. Captain Frithjof Sverre Wraal, a veteran of the Winter War in Finland, initially commanded 2nd Co but was soon replaced with the younger Lt Karsten Sveen. There was also a rapid change of 3rd Co commanders, from Lt Aslak Rönning Nesheim to Lt John Braseth. The commander of 4th (Hvy Wpns) Co was Capt Ragnar Berg, an NS member described as a charismatic natural leader, but one whose political militancy found its natural place in the Waffen-SS.

The guidon of the 'Viken' Bn (see Plate H5) is paraded on the occasion of the oath-taking ceremony in October 1941, when the Norwegian Legion swore loyalty to Hitler using a modified form of words. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

TRAINING

Organization

On 30 July 1941, under an SS-FHA order signed by SS-Brigaf Jüttner, the Freiwilligen Legion Norwegen became part of the Waffen-SS. At the beginning of August some 700 Norwegian volunteers of the 1st 'Viken' Bn were transferred by ship and train to Fallingbostel camp near Celle, in Lower Saxony, to continue military training. The unit was to be organized as a reinforced battalion, with a regimental staff, to allow for later expansion. The formation of a new 14th Anti-Tank Co began, numbered in anticipation of the formation of an entire regiment. This was placed under the command of former Norwegian Navy Lt Cdr Finn 'Finson'. (The real name of this legendary figure was Halvorsen, and he was a torpedo-boat officer who, on 16 February 1940, had helped the British Royal Navy to board the German prisoner-of-war ship *Altmark* in Norwegian waters; after Norway's defeat he had changed his surname.) Most of the command positions remained in the hands of Norwegian officers, and the official language of

Norwegian legionaries on the march during training at Fallingbostel, summer 1941. The platoon wear reed-green herringbone twill fatigue uniform, the NCO an Army M1935 field tunic with a dark green collar; no collar patches are visible. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

command was Norwegian, but some key appointments were filled by German personnel.

On 25 August the Legion's total strength was 802 men, including 51 German personnel of the liaison staff (11 officers, 15 NCOs and 25 soldiers). There were a total of 751 Norwegians, including 20 officers, 50 NCOs and 681 soldiers. The formation of other support units was also begun, such as the medical platoon and a small platoon of war correspondents. While specialist personnel were transferred to other training centres, and officers and NCOs to one at Dresden, the attached German training group (SS-Ausbildungsstab), led by SS-Hstuf Fick, continued instruction of most of the Norwegian volunteers at Fallingbostel.

National tensions

Meanwhile, discussions over the future of the Legion continued between senior Norwegian and German officers. On 5 September 1941, Jüttner, Fick, Kjelstrup and Bakke took part in a meeting in Berlin. Kjelstrup's Oslo staff would be retained for the time being; some officers (such as Brun, Nesheim and Wraal) were dismissed; and Jüttner anticipated the likely future destination of the Legion as not the Finnish front but the northern sector of the German Eastern Front. Tensions were aggravated by rumours that the Legion was imminently to lose its unique Norwegian character and be transformed into a purely German unit like those in the SS-Div 'Wiking'. Bakke sent a letter to Berlin expressing his opposition to this, given the specific promises that had been made to volunteers before they enlisted. At another meeting between Jüttner, Fick and Bakke on 26 September it was decided that the Oslo staff would be dissolved shortly; that

The machine-woven Norwegian flag patch that the Legion were authorized to wear on the left sleeve. (Courtesy Rene Chavez Collection)

SS-Hstuf Fick would follow the Legion to the front, but subordinated to Leg-Stubaf Bakke; that a reinforcement company would be created at Fallingbostel to train replacements; and finally, considering the disappointing flow of volunteers, that the Legion was definitively reduced to a single reinforced battalion.

Before the unit could be sent to the front they had to take an oath of loyalty, and disagreements arose over the formula to be adopted. In the end a compromise was agreed, by which the Norwegians would swear loyalty to Adolf Hitler, but only for the fight against Bolshevism. Quisling's presence at the ceremony held on 3 October served to calm his grumbling countrymen, and in the end only a dozen volunteers refused to take the oath, and were dismissed. The others pronounced the following words: 'I swear to God Almighty that in the fight against Bolshevism I will be loyal to the Supreme Commander of the German armed forces, Adolf Hitler, and as a valiant soldier I will always be willing to give my life to keep this oath.'

Changes of command

In the days immediately following the oath-taking ceremony Bakke returned to Norway, to meet with the heads of the Oslo staff and to try to reactivate the recruitment campaign. At the beginning of December, Kjelstrup was forced to resign, and command of the Legion officially passed to Leg-Stubaf Bakke. However, just a couple of weeks later, on 15 December, Jörgen Bakke himself was dismissed: considered to be too nationalist and insufficiently pro-German, he was transferred to the SS-Div 'Wiking' as a supernumerary officer in I/SS-Inf-Regt 'Germania'. The Legion's command was then assigned to Maj Arthur Quist, a former cavalry officer of the Royal Norwegian Army and a member of the Nasjonal Samling since 1933, who was given the rank of Legions-Sturmbannführer on his appointment. Also on 15 December, Berlin ordered the creation of a reinforcement battalion (*Ersatz-Bataillon*) for the Legion; under the command of SS-Hstuf Erich Friedrich Dahm, this would train new recruits at Holmestrand camp south of Oslo.

Order of battle

The Norwegian Legion was permanently structured on three rifle companies numbered from 1st to 3rd; a 4th Machine Gun (actually, Heavy Weapons) Company (4x MG34 machine guns in the sustained fire role, 8x 81mm mortars); and a 14th Anti-Tank Company (9x 3.7cm PaK 35/36). A medical platoon and a 'platoon' of war correspondents completed the structure, bringing total personnel up to around 1,000 men. (In the listing below, note that rank abbreviations including the characters 'scha' indicate 'Scharführer' NCO grades.)

Kommandeur: Leg-Stubaf Arthur Quist

1. Kompanie: Leg-Ostuf Olaf Lindvig
- 1. Zug: Leg-Hscha Wang
- 2. Zug: Leg-Hscha Jacobsen
- 3. Zug: Leg-Hscha Østring

2. Kompanie: Leg-Ostuf Karsten Sveen
- 1. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Jens Grönneröd
- 2. Zug: Leg-Hscha Solem
- 3. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Walter Steen

This photo of two administrative NCOs in Russia is datable to no earlier than April 1942 by the fact that both display Iron Cross ribbons – this decoration was not awarded to a Norwegian legionary until 29 March that year. Note that though both hold the rank of Legions-Unterscharführer, their insignia are typically inconsistent. The NCO on the left has the forward-facing lion collar patch, but no collar *Tresse*, while his comrade has *Tresse* but a blank collar patch. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

3. Kompanie: Leg-Ustuf John Braseth *(not yet organized)*
4. Kompanie (MG): Leg-Hstuf Ragnar Berg
1. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Knut Westad
2. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Westberg
3. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Nijäl Reppen
4. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Rolf Ravn Wirum

14. Kompanie (PaK): Leg-Hstuf Finn Finson
1. Zug: Leg-Ustuf Kaare Opsahl
2. Zug: Leg-Oscha Uglestad
3. Zug: Leg-Oscha Holst

Sanitäts-Zug: Leg-Ostuf Dr August Ingier
Leg-Ostuf John Asphaug (dentist)
Kriegsberichter-Zug: Leg-Uscha Oscar Bang (*war correspondents*)

Each company was assigned a German liaison officer (*Berater*), who from time to time in front-line fighting might assume the company command:

1. Kompanie	SS-Ostuf Dietrich Radbruch
2. Kompanie	SS-Ustuf Alfred Kohl
3. Kompanie	SS-Ustuf Friedrich Ziegler
4. Kompanie	SS-Ustuf Ernst Scheid
14. Kompanie	SS-Ustuf Josef Weiler

Insignia

Before their transfer to Germany the volunteers showed a mixed range of uniforms, including Norwegian Army, Rikshird, and German Army, with inconsistent insignia (and even in Russia the minutiae of Waffen-SS uniform regulations seem often to have been ignored). As mentioned above, the field-grey uniforms issued to the legionaries on arrival in Germany were those of the Waffen-SS, with a rectangular cloth Norwegian flag patch worn below the SS eagle on the upper left sleeve. Members of the NS Rikshird were allowed to wear its badge on the left forearm, but

in silver on black instead of yellow on red (see Plate H4). In place of the Waffen-SS right-hand collar patch with double *Sigrunen*, a patch with the Norwegian rampant lion holding an axe was authorized. The formation order of the Legion issued by the SS-FHA on 30 July 1941 (*Abt.Org./Tgb. Nr.3031/41 geh.*) had originally indicated that Norwegian volunteers were to wear on both sides of the collar a patch depicting the prow of a Viking ship, while rank was to be displayed only on the shoulder straps. The Norwegians refused to use this insignia, which was never officially distributed, and initially wore blank right-hand patches, with SS rank insignia on the left-hand collar patch as well as the shoulder straps (see also under Plate H2).

It seems that initially unauthorized left-sleeve cuffbands, lettered either '*Den Norske Legion*' or '*Legion Norwegen*' in silver on black, were acquired by some volunteers. These cuffbands were officially replaced from October 1941 with the authorized pattern lettered '*Frw. Legion Norwegen*', but the Germans gave low priority to supplying these, and it was not until September 1942 that they had been distributed to all the volunteers (see Plate H3).

Leg-Stubaf Arthur Quist, appointed as the Legionsführer on 15 December 1941, was a cavalry officer who had been a member of the Silver Medal-winning Norwegian equestrian team at the 1928 Olympic Games. This photo, showing him with a habitual cigarette, dates from after 10 May 1942, when he was decorated with the Iron Cross 1st Class by the commander of Kampfgruppe Jeckeln. For uniform details see Plate F1. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

THE EASTERN FRONT, 1942

At the end of 1941 the Norwegian volunteers were transferred to Stettin, ready to be taken by sea to Finland. In the event the Legion spent almost two months there waiting for their passage; while Maj Quist took the opportunity to complete formation of the third rifle company, this long delay saw a considerable number of defections. About 200 of the volunteers asked to be repatriated, and in order to avoid problems with the German authorities Quist officially endorsed most of these as due to 'health problems'.

At the same time, the clandestine formation of a ski battalion began in Norway, in the hope of sending it to the Finnish front independently

On the Leningrad front in winter 1941/42, an Oberscharführer of the Legion carrying an MP40 sub-machine gun makes his way along one of the unit's defensive trenches – primitive even by Great War standards, and difficult to improve in hard-frozen ground. He wears the German *Bergmütze* mountain cap issued when the unit was shipped to Russia, and a hooded white camouflage coat which gave concealment but no extra warmth. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

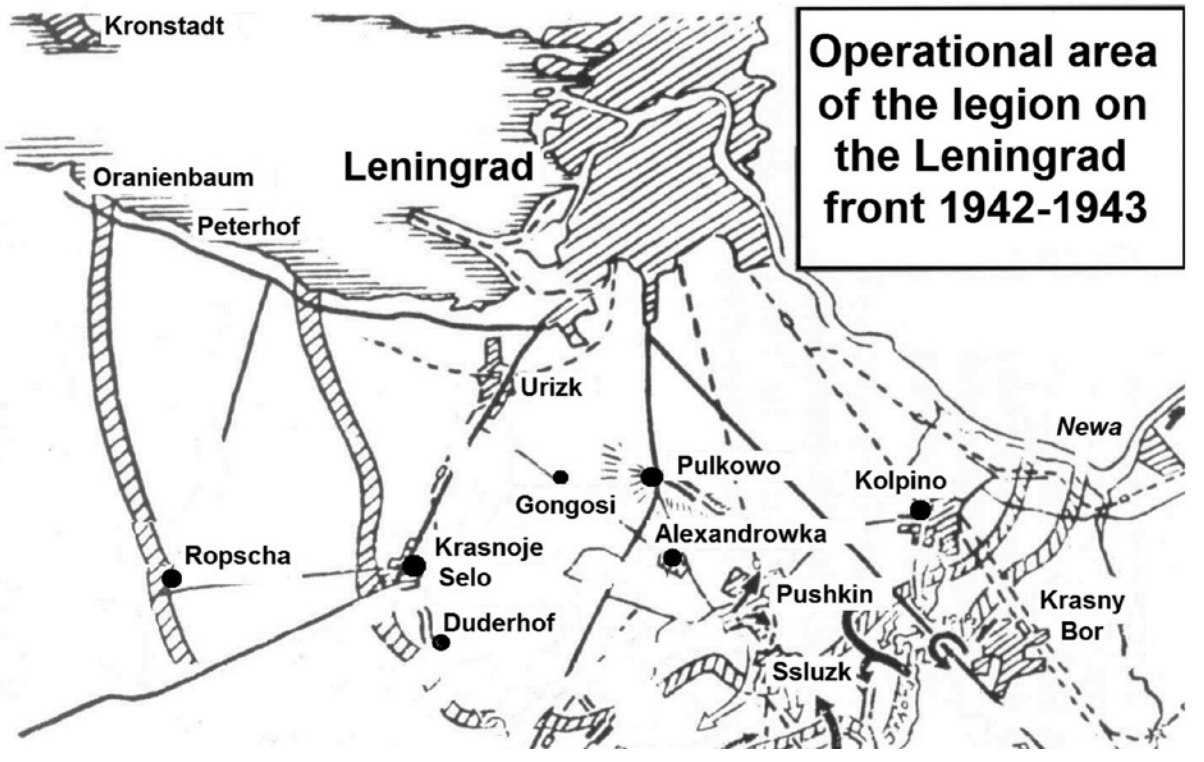
Posed photo of legionaries manning a defensive position; the visible weapons are an MP40 and an MG34, but the unit also received some captured French equipment including Hotchkiss machine guns. The man on the right has a non-regulation winter cap. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

of the Legion. Two Norwegian Army officers, Maj Kiellan and cavalry Capt Baumann, trained volunteers at a camp near Torpo north-west of Oslo, and they 'hijacked' for this unit some volunteers intended for the Legion. However, at the end of December 1941, when the embryo ski unit numbered about 120 men, the Germans intervened to suspend this project; it would be resumed, this time with German approval, in the summer of 1942.

Emergency deployment by air

Throughout January 1942, a major Soviet counteroffensive had been putting great pressure on the German Army Group North's front line along the Volhov River south-east of the Leningrad front, and 2nd Shock Army had punched a deep salient westward between the German XXXIX and XXXVIII Armee-Korps. On 17 February, Reichsführer-SS Himmler went to Stettin in person to inspect the Norwegian Legion, and announced their imminent departure for that sector of the front.

This legionary seen splitting firewood wears a white knitted cover over his mountain cap, and has a non-regulation sheepskin jacket (sse Plate C3). This was presumably either found locally or sent from Norway, since it seems unlikely that the Wehrmacht would share any of the badly needed proceeds of its own desperate public appeal for warm clothing during its first winter in Russia. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)



(Russian placenames in Cyrillic are variously spelt when transcribed into Latin characters.) After its arrival and concentration at Pushkin the Legion first operated on the Volhov River front, about 50km south-east of Kolpino and off this sketchmap. From early April 1942 it fought in the Uritsk sector on the Gulf of Finland/Bay of Kronstadt, and from late May to December in the Gongosi sector, returning there in January 1943 after a brief rest. Thereafter it served on the Neva River front – see map on page 34. Throughout its tour in Russia the Legion's base for logistics and services was at Krasnoje Selo, with a rail connection to the rear areas and ultimately to Germany. (Author's map)

The following day they were moved to Stettin airport, where more than a hundred Junkers Ju52 trimotor transports were waiting for them (mainly transferred from the Mediterranean front, these aircraft were ill-equipped for temperatures of around -20° Centrigrade).

The officers were told that some planes would land at Pleskau, others at Riga and others still at Gatschina along the Luga River front south of Leningrad, depending on weather conditions and the current military situation. A position at Pushkin was chosen as the assembly area, from where the Norwegian volunteers would be moved up to the front line. The first element of 300 men, including Leg-Stubaf Quist's staff and Leg-Ustuf Lindvig's 1st Company, landed at Riga in the middle of a violent snowstorm, which caused three Junkers to make emergency landings, with some injuries. This, and the other elements from Gatschina and Pleskau, were moved to Pushkin by train and trucks. The Norwegians were stationed around this former residence of the Tsars for about two weeks; while the officers were sent to reconnoitre their future front-line positions, troop training was focused on weapons-handling in these extreme winter conditions.

Into the front line, February–March 1942

Between 28 February and 10 March the Norwegian Legion was gradually integrated into the SS-Kampfgruppe Jeckeln, also headquartered at Pushkin, which had been operational since 17 February under Allgemeine-SS Ogruf & Polizei Gen Friedrich Jeckeln. This strong battle group also included units of the Army's 58. Inf-Div; Ordnungs-Polizei Bataillonen 56, 121, 305, 306 and 311; a battalion from the 'Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler', and artillery from the SS-Polizei-Division. The Norwegian companies were

Although the Norwegians were accustomed to very cold winters, they still found conditions on the Leningrad front in early 1942 extremely challenging. This soldier clad in snow camouflage has acquired a Soviet PPSh-41 sub-machine gun, a popular capture for German troops due to its large magazine capacity. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

sent south-eastwards to a sector of the defences about 5km wide along the Volkhov River front, while the services, logistic elements and field hospital were installed in a rear base at Krasnoje Selo.

Although the Legion's front was in an allegedly quiet sector, the no-man's-land between the lines was narrow, and as soon as they moved into their new positions the legionaries immediately came under fire from snipers and harassing mortars and artillery, whose observers enjoyed constant surveillance over the German lines from several low hills. The Norwegians' situation was aggravated by extreme cold and deep snow; although accustomed since childhood to harsh winter conditions, they lacked adequate equipment and were soon suffering casualties from frostbite.

In order to better control his sector Leg-Stubaf Quist ordered his officers to send out patrols to identify the enemy's fire positions and strengths. The Soviets also put out reconnaissance patrols, especially at night, which infiltrated the Norwegian positions and grabbed some sentries. Quist then ordered the abandonment of some of the exposed two-man outposts in the forward edge of the defensive line. These were usually about 300m apart, too far to have any hope of preventing infiltration by night. The main defensive line held by the companies was organized in a zig-zag and included a series of bunkers where heavy weapons were emplaced, in order to generate crossfire against possible enemy attacks.

On 28 February 1942 the Legion reported its first combat fatality, Legionary (Leg-Schütze) Erling Stömmes of 1. Kompanie, followed on 4 March by Cpl (Leg-Uscha) Kristian Vaaler from the same company, killed by a mortar round. A steady drain of losses to snipers and artillery continued: on 19 March a Soviet shell scored a direct hit on the bunker occupied by Leg-Ostuf Charles Westberg, a career officer commanding 2. Zug of 4. Kompanie, killing the lieutenant and three of his men on the spot. Shortly after this the Red Army attempted a strong infantry probe: on the night of 21 March a whole battalion attacked the positions of 2. and 14. Kompanien, but after the first moments of surprised disarray the legionaries recovered, sending up flares and opening heavy machine-gun fire. When the enemy withdrew they left some 200 casualties in the snow

In May 1942, during a visit to the front by Quisling and other Norwegian leaders, Minister of Justice Sverre Riisnæs, wearing dark blue Nasjonal Samling uniform, congratulates officers and NCOs of the Legion who have been decorated with the Iron Cross. Note at left the Legion's flag – see Plate H1. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

in front of the Legion's positions, while only one Norwegian was reported killed. Legionary John Adolf Valentinsen wrote of this action:

> 'Six hundred Soviets attacked last night, [and] two hundred lie dead in no-man's land in the middle of the barbed wire. A Soviet patrol managed to enter one of our trenches and took one of our machine-gun crewmen prisoner; while returning to their positions they stumbled upon our Sgt von Weymarn, who [single-handedly] … killed them all while saving the prisoner. The whole day was spent in picking up the corpses, and the wounded Soviets to transfer them to the hospital'.

Legionary Lars Nielsen of 2. Kompanie particularly distinguished himself that night, and on 29 March became the first member of the Legion to be decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class. After the 21/22 March attack the Soviets reverted to harassing the Norwegians with sniper and mortar fire, and Lars Nielsen was killed only days later, on 1 April. From the diary of Alf Rödseth of 14. Kompanie:

> 'Sunday, 22 March: 15–20 meters from our trench lay the Soviet dead; for our part we suffered one killed and one wounded. Later that day my great friend Strand fell [when] a bullet pierced his helmet. I have not slept much in these last days … I feel so dirty, almost like a pig, since there is no water to wash or even to drink.
>
> 'Tuesday, 24 March: Spring has arrived and the trenches have filled with water.
>
> 'Wednesday 25 March: The night has been quiet, but two of my comrades have fallen, one while he was on sentry duty. Today I could finally wash my hands. I wrote a letter home.
>
> 'Thursday 26 March: Tonight we sent two patrols out, one of the 3rd Company and another of the 5th.[1] Platoon leader Söfteland was wounded by a bullet in his arm, while two other men were slightly injured.

1 During March 1942 the formation of a fifth rifle company was begun with personnel from the 4th and 14th, but it was short-lived, and was never officially registered in the Legion's battle order. It was initially led by Leg-Ostuf Tor Marstrander, a former officer of the Norwegian Navy, and when he was transferred to the battalion staff it passed to Leg-Ostuf Einar Höve. Following the losses suffered during April this 5th Company was dissolved and its survivors reverted to the 4th Company.

July 1942: during a visit to the front, the Secretary General of the Nasjonal Samling, Jörgen Fuglesand, honours the Legion's dead; note the 'runic' grave marker. At left is Leg-Ustuf Sophus Kahrs, then commanding 1. Kompanie. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

'Friday 27 March: Today Elverum was wounded in the shoulder, so there were only two of us left in the bunker, in the mud and water. 'Tuesday, 31 March: Today one [man was] killed and another seriously injured in the 3rd Company.'

Legionary 2nd Lt Braseth's 3. Kompanie was among the most exposed to enemy fire, and, as the last to be formed, had always been under-manned; it had departed for the front with less than 100 men, and by the beginning of April these had been reduced to 52. The constant enemy fire claimed several victims among the unit's officers: after the loss of Leg-Ustuf Westberg of 4. Kompanie, the commander of 1. Kompanie, Leg-Ostuf Olav Lindvig, was seriously injured, soon followed by Leg-Ustufs Grönneröd and Sveen of 2. Kompanie. Sturmbannführer Quist wrote to Quisling appealing for reinforcements, and especially for the transfer of the Legion to Finland. Some replacements did arrive, but never enough to bring the Legion above the strength of a reinforced battalion.

The Uritsk sector, April 1942

At the beginning of April the Legion was suddenly withdrawn from its sector on the Volkhov and, during the night of 4/5 April, transferred to the Finssoe Kojrowa area. The legionaries anticipated that they might get a few days to rest and visit Krasnoje Selo, where their service units were located, but they were soon disappointed. On the afternoon of 5 April they began to march north, in the direction of the coast of the Gulf of Finland, and after travelling about 10km they reached Uritsk – south-west of besieged Leningrad, whose suburbs could be seen on the horizon. Here the Soviet trenches were so close to the German positions that the voices of enemy soldiers could be heard.

All the Legion's companies were ordered to dig in. The spring thaw had filled the old trenches with water, and parapets were collapsing into the mud, so the Norwegians' first task was to reconstruct fighting positions – helped in this exhausting and repetitive work by a militarized company of

Latvian labourers. In this sector the Legion were tactically subordinated to Inf-Regt 409 of the Wehrmacht's 122. Infanterie-Division.

The first death in these new positions was recorded on 11 April, when a sniper killed Leg-Schütze Bert Böe of 2. Kompanie; one of the youngest volunteers, he had added two years to his actual age of 15 to deceive the recruiters. Other volunteers had to repeatedly expose themselves to danger when tasked with maintaining the telephone connections between the Leningrad front and units to the west facing the enemy-held island fortress of Kronstadt, which were continually being cut by Soviet artillery fire. The Norwegian communications teams had to make 24km round trips over the frozen surface of the Gulf, constantly under the threat of Soviet fire. This mission was successfully completed several times, and the Germans officially recognized the valour shown by the Norwegian legionaries when, on 20 April (the occasion of Hitler's birthday celebrations) the commander of Inf-Regt 409 awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class to Leg-Ostuf Sveen, commanding 2. Kompanie, and to Leg-Sturmann (L/Cpl) Lande.

Patrol warfare, and enemy response

This period was characterized by lively patrolling into enemy territory. From their first arrival Inf-Regt 409 had been ordered to develop an exact picture of the enemy positions and strength in front of them. To this end, each company sent out night reconnaissance or fighting patrols, either to capture prisoners or to eliminate the most exposed Soviet forward positions.

On 12 April, Leg-Hstuf Ragnar Berg, commanding 4. Kompanie, decided to personally lead a determined attempt to knock out three Soviet bunkers, take prisoners and capture enemy weapons. For this operation three separate patrols were organized, while German artillery was tasked to provide diversionary fires. Captain Berg planned the operation in detail with other officers, particularly the separate approach routes for the three patrols. Volunteers were requested for the mission; numerous officers and NCOs stepped forward, and in the end about 25

One of the 14. Kompanie's 3.7cm anti-tank guns in a Russian village in spring/summer 1942, apparently being employed to engage enemy strongpoints in support of infantry. The inadequacy of this weapon against the T-34 is well known, but it is often forgotten that infantry AT guns spent as much time firing in general support of the rifle companies as they did in anti-tank defence. Besides, not much Soviet armour was committed to the usually static Leningrad front, and not all Soviet AFVs encountered were T-34s. Note the gun-hauling crossbelt worn by the central man; with a combat weight of only 327kg (about 720lb) and a full crew of six, the small PaK 35/36 was easy to manoeuvre and to conceal. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

Some of this group wear outwards-facing rampant lion collar patches, others blank patches. Because some men of both units wore such lion patches, it is impossible to be absolutely certain that they are Norwegians rather than men of the 'Galician' (Ukrainian) 14. Waffen-Gren-Div der SS which reached the front in July 1944. However, these men certainly wear the 1938-pattern mountain cap rather than the M1943 general-issue peaked field cap, and the fact that the right-hand NCO still wears a '*Schiffschen*' sidecap also argues that these are Norwegians in 1942. (Courtesy Hugh Page Taylor Collection)

men were selected. One patrol would be led by Berg himself, the second by Leg-Ostuf Vestad, and the third by Leg-Ustuf Ljungberg. At 2200 hours on the night of 15 April the volunteers gathered at the command post of 4. Kompanie, handing in their documents, identity tags and other personal effects, and at around 0035 on the 16th they headed towards the chosen jumping-off positions.

After about an hour, Leg-Hstuf Berg led the first patrol out in the centre, with Vestad's on his left and Ljungberg's on the right. Moving in absolute darkness, they quickly crossed the 80–90m that separated them from the Soviet positions. Vestad's patrol was the first to close on his objective, immediately followed by Ljungberg's, and both waited for Berg's to reach its position to open the attack. Suddenly a Soviet flare illuminated the battlefield, indicating that the movement or sound of Berg's patrol had alerted the enemy, and after a few seconds a hurricane of heavy-weapons fire and grenades hit the Norwegians. One of the first to fall was Ragnar Berg, while his men tried desperately to take cover. Another officer following the patrol ordered it to fall back carrying the wounded, but it was not possible to recover Berg's body.

While the Soviets concentrated on annihilating Berg's party, on the left Leg-Ostuf Vestad decided to launch the attack on his assigned bunker, and managed to clear it. He then ran to help Berg's patrol with three other men, among them Leg-Uscha Jöntvedt, who was quickly wounded. When Vestad realized that Berg's men had retreated he questioned one of the casualties left on the field, Leg-Uscha Trondrud, who had been paralysed by a bullet wound. Before Trondrud died he managed to indicate the direction of Berg's body; under intense fire, Vestad found it, but, wounded by splinters in his chest and face, he was unable to carry it in.

On the right, the Ljungberg patrol's attack on its assigned bunker had also been successful, but they soon had to fall back in the face of a Soviet counterattack, with Leg-Ustuf Ljungberg himself and Legionary Lindbom covering the retreat. When they themselves moved to follow,

Ljungberg was mortally wounded by a machine-gun burst in the back, and while trying to rescue him Lindbom was seriously injured by a mine.

As soon as he received news of the costly failure of this operation Leg-Stubaf Quist took immediate action to recover the casualties before dawn halted all movement in no-man's-land, and alerted the Legion's medical services. At 0345hrs the search had to be suspended, leaving Berg and at least six other dead unrecovered. In his report to Inf-Regt 409, Quist recorded the results of the action: two enemy bunkers destroyed, one set on fire, at least eight enemy killed, while the Norwegians suffered eight dead – including Leg-Uscha von Weymarn, the hero of the 21 March night battle – and 14 wounded.

An Unterscharführer enrolled at the SS-Junkerschule Bad Tölz displays its cuffband immediately above a more faded example of that of the Norwegian Volunteer Legion. Other details to note are the Waffen-SS sidecap, and the absence of the Norwegian flag patch, although he retains the Rikshird badge. His girlfriend wears the uniform and breast badge of the *Kvinnehird* – see Plate G3. (Courtesy Erik Norling Collection)

This attempt provoked the Red Army into shelling the Norwegian positions for almost a week, followed by an infantry attack in regimental strength on 22 April. The first positions to be hit were those of 1. Kompanie, located close to the coast along the road that connected Leningrad with the enemy pocket around Oranienbaum to the west, behind the German lines. Battalion HQ was ordered to abandon the most forward positions to try to limit losses. By field telephone Leg-Hscha Björn Østring, leading 3. Zug of 1. Kompanie, had brief contact with his 1. Zug counterpart Leg-Ustuf Per Wang before communication broke down. Østring wrote that after shelling in the area of 1. and 2. Kompanien, Wang reported that he was undergoing an assault in his sector around the location known as the Red Ruin. The phone was then passed to Olaf Fredriksen, who reported that Ustuf Wang was leading a counterattack – and a moment later that the lieutenant had fallen.

Assembling a platoon, Østring and SS-Ostuf Dietrich Radbruch – 1. Kompanie's German liaison officer, who now took command – launched a counterattack to try to relieve 1. Zug, and after furious hand-to-hand combat the enemy were forced to retreat, while the Østring platoon suffered only several wounded.

Recognition, May 1942

After about three months of front-line service the Norwegian Legion had been reduced by casualties to between 500 and 600 men, and no reinforcements were arriving from Norway. Major Quist's request that the Legion be withdrawn to the second line for a period of rest was not granted.

On 10 May a group of legionaries were sent to the rear base at Krasnoje Selo, to be decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class in recognition of their parts in the defensive fighting of 22 April. Those decorated were

SS-Hstuf Jonas Lie, commander of the new Polizei-Kompanie, photographed with Reichsführer-SS Himmler at the Legion's rear holding camp at Mitau, Latvia during summer 1942. Note that Lie does not wear the Norwegian flag patch. The pale item between his Rikshird badge and the Legion cuffband is a document which he has tucked into the functioning turn-back tunic cuff. (Legionsminner, 1943)

SS-Ostuf Radbruch; the battalion's doctor Leg-Ostuf Ingier, and a medical orderly, Halvdan Bryn; Leg-Ostuf Braseth of 3. Kompanie; Leg-Hscha Østring of 1. Kompanie, and eight other men of his platoon: Leg-Oscha Nilsen, Leg-Uscha Bryhn, and Leg-Schtzn Ulven, Lüttichau, Sörensen, Nielsen, Tönnesen and Engen. On the same occasion the Legion's commander Leg-Stubaf Quist was decorated with the Iron Cross 1st Class. The Norwegian unit was mentioned in the *Heeresbericht* and in L Armee-Korps' daily order *Korpstagesbefehl Nr 147*, signed by Gen der Inf Herbert von Böckmann.

On 16 May the volunteers received news of an imminent visit by Quisling, who had been head of the Norwegian government since 1 February. As the senior Nasjonal Samling official in the unit, Björn Østring took charge of organizing some details of the reception unbeknown to the battalion staff and the German liaison team. Immediately after Quisling reviewed the Legion and congratulated those who had recently been decorated, Østring managed to steer him into his own bunker for a frank conversation about the actual condition of the battalion, and this ended with Quisling giving the sergeant-major assurances about the Legion's future.

On 25 May the entire Legion was transferred by trucks to the Gongosi sector, a few kilometres south of Leningrad, where two particularly sensitive points marked the limits of the front they were to hold: on the left, the Soviet-held 'Hill 66.6A', and on the right the village of Pulkovo. Here, snipers were a plague, and three men were mortally hit on 27 May alone. With the sudden warm weather mosquitoes added to the troops' misery in the lice-ridden trenches, and the stench of unburied enemy dead in no-man's-land became nauseating.

On 12 June it was ordered that while the CO took a week's leave, command of the Legion would pass temporarily to Leg-Hstuf Finson, whose anti-tank company would in turn pass to Leg-Ustuf Opsahl. On 15 June another group of legionaries were awarded the Iron Cross by order of Gen Böckmann, but German-Norwegian relations were growing acrimonious once again. A few days before taking his leave, Leg-Stubaf Quist had learned that somebody from the High Command was planning to transfer the Legion to the Minsk area, to be deployed in anti-partisan warfare alongside the Freikorps Danmark, the Danish volunteer SS unit. Quist categorically refused to consider his men being employed in rear-area security operations (a mission which had sinister implications). To try to calm tempers, on 1 July 1942 the Secretary General of the Nasjonal Samling, Jörgen Fuglesang (who was also a minister in the Quisling government) visited the Legion, as did Reichskommissar

(continued on page 33)

NASJONAL SAMLING & RIKSHIRD
1: *NS Fører* Vidkun Quisling; Oslo, 1941
2: *NS Sveitfører*, *Rikshird*, c. 1942
3: *Hirdmann*, *Førergarden*; Oslo, late 1943

NORWEGIAN GERMANIC SS
1: Volunteer, *Norske-SS*; Elverum, May–June 1941
2: *SS-Lagfører*, *Germanske SS Norge*; Oslo, 1943
3: *SS-Neststormfører*, *Germanske SS Norge*; Oslo, 1943

***DEN NORSKE LEGION*, GERMANY**
1: Volunteer, August 1941
2: Barracks sign
3a & 3b: Trainee anti-tank gunner & instructor, 14. Kompanie
4: *Legions-Hauptscharführer*; Stettin, late 1942

1
2
3
LENINGRAD FRONT, MARCH 1942
1: Runner
2: Non-commissioned officer
3: Junior officer

KRASNOJE SELO, SUMMER 1942
1: *Legions-Untersturmführer*
2: *Legions-Unterscharführer*
3: *Legions-Schütze*

PERSONALITIES

1: *Legions-Sturmbannführer* Arthur Quist, summer 1942
2: *SS-Sturmbannführer* Jonas Lie, spring 1943
3: *Legions-Unterscharführer* Nicolay von Weymarn, March 1942
4: *Legions-Hauptsturmführer* Ragnar Berg, March 1942

FEMALE AUXILIARIES; MITAU, SUMMER 1942
1: Nurse, walking-out dress
2: Nurse, ward dress
3: Welfare assistant, *Kvinnehird*

1

2

3

FLAGS & INSIGNIA
See commentary text for details.

4

5

6

7

Josef Terboven and the Higher SS & Police Leader for Norway and Finland, SS-Ogruf Wilhelm Rediess. Fuglesang assured the Norwegian volunteers that the transfer to Minsk had been cancelled.

On 12 July, the Legion's first anniversary, a report to the SS-FHA in Berlin put the unit's current strength at 717 men, but on the very next day that figure was revised down to 590. Given that the Legion had mustered 1,032 on its arrival on the Eastern Front, and had since received about 100 reinforcements, this represented some 48 per cent casualties. The replacements had been sent by the Legion's Ersatz-Bataillon at Holmestrand to a holding camp at Mitau in Latvia, but the dearth of new volunteers had meanwhile led to the Replacement Bn's reduction to a single company. Many Norwegian volunteers for the Waffen-SS were in fact directed to other units, such as those of the SS-Div 'Wiking', or two Norwegian Police companies and a small SS-Ski-Jäger-Btl serving with the SS-Div 'Nord' in Finland.

Spattered with mud during the rains of autumn 1942, this courier of the Legion wears the Wehrmacht-issue motorcyclist's rubberized coat. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

During the following summer months the Legion suffered a steady trickle of casualties in defensive and patrol actions. One of the latter was distinguished enough to be mentioned in the operational diary of L Armee-Korps, where Gen der Kav Philipp Kleffel wrote:

> 'During the night hours of 25.08.42, assault patrols from 3./Freiw. Legion 'Norwegen', under the command of Hauptscharführer Brenna, from 1./Inf-Regt 405 under the orders of Oberleutnant Biegler, and from 7./Inf-Rgt 405 under the orders of Scharführer [sic] Lebrecht, were all conducted with great valour. All patrols penetrated the enemy trenches, eliminating enemy troops and destroying bunkers. Also recovered were many automatic weapons, two heavy machine guns and four mortars, and many prisoners were taken, and I send my greatest admiration to the officers and their gallant men.'

From 31 August 1942, following the dissolution of the Kampfgruppe Jeckeln, the Norwegian Legion was transferred from the tactical control of Inf-Regt 409 of 122. Inf-Div to that of the Dutch SS volunteer unit Freiwilligen Legion Niederlande, part of 2. SS-Infanterie-Brigade commanded by SS-Brigaf Gottfried Klingemann. This formation, originally formed from SS-Totenkopf units and committed to anti-partisan warfare from the outset of Operation 'Barbarossa', had now been sent to the Volkhov front. It already incorporated the 19th and 21st Latvian Security (Schuma) Bns, and the addition of the Netherlands, Flemish and

Norwegian legionaries being transferred to a new sector by train. Note at right what appears to be the Waffen-SS heavy field-grey winter parka with a large hood lined with white fleece or fur, first issued in winter 1942/43. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

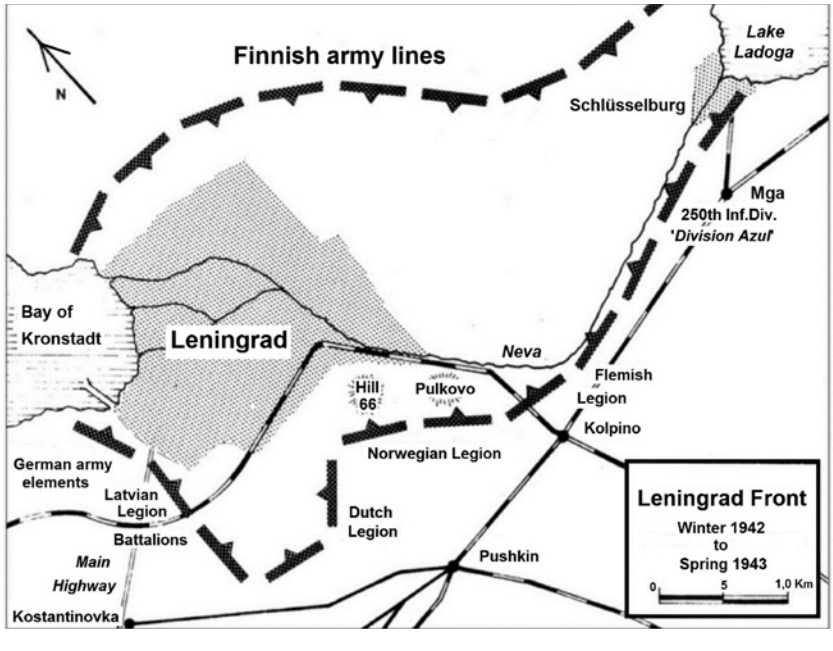
now the Norwegian Volunteer Legions turned it into a true multi-national force.[2]

Innovations: eligibility for Bad Tölz

Towards the end of summer 1942 the Legion staff were ordered by SS-Brigaf Jüttner to select a group of volunteers who had distinguished themselves in combat to attend a course at the Waffen-SS officer academy at Bad Tölz in Bavaria. Also, in an order dated 28 July, the SS-FHA stated that henceforth Norwegian legionaries were to receive the same treatment as all other members of the Waffen-SS in terms of health care, disability benefits, and the possibility of following the same career paths. The conditions for applying for admission to a Kriegs-Junker-Lehrgang (apirant officer education course) were as follows:

(a) A minimum of six months' service in the Waffen-SS
(b) Having served as a platoon leader, and therefore holding at least the rank of Legions-Sturmann
(c) A strong character
(d) A sufficient knowledge of German
(e) Maximum ages of 28 for line officers' courses and 35 for reserve officers.

2 In January 1943 the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade would become an entirely Latvian formation, and in May it would form the nucleus for the future Latvian 19. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS.



Approximate front lines around Leningrad, winter 1942. Off the right-hand edge of the sketchmap, the German-held 'Siniavino salient' up to the shore of Lake Ladoga east of the Neva was only about 16km (10 miles) wide. Despite the simultaneous demands of the Stalingrad front, the Soviet High Command assembled enough forces to the east of the salient to finally break the epic siege of Leningrad. Starting on 12 January 1943, they launched simultaneous offensives both eastwards across the frozen Neva from inside the pocket, and westwards from a north-south front delineating the right of the salient. On 18 January the two thrusts met up, creating an east-west corridor south of Lake Ladoga. In February a further offensive from around Kolpino eliminated German defences further south, particularly those around Krasny Bor to which the Spanish '*Division Azul*' had retreated. (Author's map)

Norwegian Legion shelter bunker in winter 1942/43; note that the soldiers now display dark arm-stripes presumably in 'colours of the day' on their voluminous snow-camouflage coats. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

By the beginning of September about 20 selected legionaries had left for Bad Tölz. (Some, including Björn Østring, who were intended to serve as leaders of the Nasjonal Samling in Norway, were also sent to Nazi Party political training schools for three to four weeks of ideological education.) The first course at Bad Tölz to admit non-Germans included Dutch, Flemish, Finnish, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian volunteers, mostly from the SS-Div 'Wiking'. On 1 October 1942 a total of 29 Norwegian aspirants, including 15 from the Legion, applied for the 9th Course, and all but two passed the entrance examination. The course itself began on 1 February 1943 and lasted about six months, during which the students received temporary ranks. On 31 July 1943 the first 26 Norwegian graduates were promoted to the rank of SS-Untersturmführer. By the end of the war more than 200 Norwegians would have passed through Bad Tölz.

Norwegian Police SS Company

During the summer of 1942 the Minister of Police, Jonas Lie, organized a company of 160 men drawn from the ranks of the Norwegian Police, to serve with the Norwegian Legion as a new rifle company. Officially it was named the 1st Police Company (*1. Politi-Kompani* in Norwegian, and 1. SS und Polizei-Kompanie in German – hereafter, for simplicity, 'Polizei-Kompanie'). On 1 September 1942 the volunteers underwent a medical examination at the Majorstua school in Oslo before being transferred to Holmenstrand, where they received uniforms and equipment. These were of the usual Waffen-SS pattern, but with a special right-collar badge differing from that of the Legion:

apparently the rampant lion faced to the left as viewed, was crowned, was of a slightly 'slimmer' shape, and was made of zinc metal (but see under Plate H2). At Holmenstrand the volunteers received basic drill instruction, so that on 4 September they were able to parade in Oslo in front of Quisling to receive their flag (see Plate H6). On 7 September they left by sea for Reval (today's Tallin), the capital of Estonia, where they arrived on 12 September. Two days later they set off by train to Krasnogvardeisk and thence to the Legion's rear base at Krasnoje Selo. Officially attached to the Legion (or incorporated into it – sources differ as to the terminology) from 15 September, the Police Company continued its training around Duderhof for about three weeks before being sent into the line.

The company's command was assumed by Jonas Lie himself with the rank of SS- Hauptsturmführer, and he chose as his adjutant his long-time Norwegian Police right-hand man Capt Carl Stephanson. The company's three platoons were led by Leg-Ustuf Paul Johann Jørgenvåg, Leg-Ustuf Per Dahlen and Leg-Ustuf Harald Svenke. After completing training, on 8–9 October the company joined the rest of the Legion in the line, occupying trenches facing the overlooking Soviet-held Hill 66.6A. The Legion's front was about 1,700m wide, leaving gaps of at least 100m between defensive positions.

THE WINTER BATTLES, 1942–43

At the beginning of September 1942 a new battle group was formed, named after its commander SS-Ostubaf Fizthum, and incorporating most of the units of 2. SS-Inf-Bde: the Netherlands and Norwegian Legions, and the Latvian 19th and 21st Battalions. The Norwegian unit was to be mainly engaged alongside the Dutch volunteers, and only rarely in conjunction with the Latvian units. (About 10km east of the Legion's positions, the Spaniards of the *Division Azul* were deployed over 29km of front between Kolpino and Krasny Bor: see MAA 103, *Germany's Spanish Volunteers 1941–45*). In September 1942, the Legion's company commanders were as follows:
Kommandeur: Leg-Stubaf Arthur Quist
Adjutant: SS-Ostuf Friedrich Ziegler
1. Kompanie: Leg-Ustuf Sophus Kahrs
2. Kompanie: Leg-Ustuf Hans Georg Holter
3. Kompanie: Leg-Ostuf John Braseth
4. Kompanie (MG): Leg-Ostuf Njal Reppen
14. Kompanie (PaK): Leg-Hstuf Finn Finson
Polizei-Kompanie: SS-Hstuf Jonas Lie

Also in September 1942, some of the female staff assigned to the Norwegian Legion (nurses and care workers) were transferred from rear facilities up to the Leningrad front. Some of these young women volunteers would be killed or wounded while caring for their fellow countrymen in the front line, and some would be decorated with the Iron Cross.

Soviet attacks of November–December 1942

On 26 November the positions defended by Braseth's 3. Kompanie were attacked, but the Soviets left at least 20 casualties on the field for the

loss of a single Norwegian. A legionary of the Polizei-Kompanie, Rasmus Hetland, wrote in his diary:

> '26 November 1942: Heilege, the nicest guy in the company, fell at 11.45am after the explosion of a Soviet mortar bomb. At 10.00am the Soviets attacked, suffering the loss of about 20 casualties, two heavy machine guns, a sub-machine gun and several rifles. One of the Soviets deserted and came over to our ranks; he was 17 years old and was afraid to return to his family, because of the poor results that had been achieved.'

Hetland noted that two days later a Soviet patrol attacked the Norwegian position again:

> 'We realized that there were eight Russians about 200 metres in front of our trenches, shooting and hiding. Dahlen, me, Sandvold, Nytorpet and Böks put on snow camouflage to look for them. We eliminated one of the Soviets, [and] captured a captain who was so seriously injured that he died the following day. The third Soviet shot Bök in the stomach, but was swept away by a 25-shot burst of my machine gun … The others fled.'

In a special order of the day SS-Ostubaf Fitzthum congratulated the Norwegians, decorating two members of the company with the Iron Cross 2nd Class. During this period some reinforcements came up from the rear base at Mitau; this allowed partial reorganization of various companies, particularly the understrength anti-tank crews of 14. Kompanie. With the approach of winter new cold-weather clothing was also issued by the German quartermasters. The Red Army, always

Anti-tank crew of the Legion's 14. Kompanie in the depths of winter. This was the element most often detached to support other units, as at Mga in the last week of January 1943. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

Disabled Soviet KV-1 tanks abandoned in front of the Norwegian positions, February 1943. They may have been knocked out by modifed French 75mm AT guns that had been added to 14. Kompanie's inventory. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

more accustomed to fighting in the snow, intensified their raids against the German lines. These posed a constant threat to men holding the most advanced outposts, who particularly dreaded being taken prisoner.

After five months of duty in the Gongosi sector, at the beginning of December 1942 the Norwegian Legion was relieved in its positions by the Netherlands Legion. It was transferred to Krasnoje Selo as a reserve for Kampfgruppe Fitzthum, but the need for its companies to be available for deployment to the most threatened points of the front was very soon demonstrated.

On 4 December the Soviets attacked the Legion's old stretch of the line. After repelling an initial assault the Dutch volunteers were forced to abandon some forward positions, leaving a dangerous gap, which the Norwegian Legion was ordered to help the Dutch close. Even before the order arrived from Kampfgruppe headquarters there was already a Norwegian element close by, and aware of the situation. The Polizei-Kompanie, only 58 men strong, had not yet been transferred back to Krasnoje Selo; from only a kilometre behind the trenches its officers had already seen red flares fired above Gongosi, and soon afterwards a smoke screen pushing towards the Dutch positions.

The commander's adjutant, Police Capt Stephanson, informed SS-Hstuf Lie that communications with the Legion's command post had been cut, and Soviet artillery fire began to fall on the company's position, causing one killed and two wounded. The platoon commander Leg-Ustuf Per Dahlen managed to identify an enemy forward observation post on Hill 66.6A; he immediately took several men across no-man's-land and succeeded in eliminating it (an action for which he would be decorated with the Iron Cross). In the meantime, while shells continued to fall, a sudden snowstorm completely cut visibility between the platoons. From his command post SS-Hstuf Lie ordered that all available men, including

normally non-combatant personnel, obtain weapons to prepare for an impending infantry assault. A well-known member of the Legion's team of war correspondents, Karl Holter, was present with the Police Company: 'We expected the Soviets from all sides, since the lines between our positions and Gongosi were completely blown. News came from the first platoon, on the left flank, that even the connection with the Dutch had been cut … We could only count on ourselves.'

In spite of incessant artillery fire that seemed to foreshadow an assault, in the event the Soviets did not attack the Norwegian positions, concentrating their efforts against those defended desperately by the Dutch. At dawn contact with the Legion command post was re-established and the first reinforcements began to arrive, to replace the nine killed and about 50 wounded. Among the fallen were Leg-Uscha Ivar Staff, Leg-Stmn Gaarder and Leg-Schtz Tharaldsen, lost during a reconnaissance patrol. In a letter to the 22-year-old Ivar Staff's parents in Oslo on 14 December, Leg-Ustuf Opsahl would write:

> 'During the day of December 4, the Soviets attacked with the intention of breaking into our positions, but they could not. After five hours of fighting, with few men available, I was ordered to hold our positions and prevent the Soviets from going further, without knowing the enemy's strength or movements. Your son immediately presented himself to lead a patrol, and left … with two other comrades. [They] soon stumbled into an enemy group consisting of 50– 60 men, who had managed to break into our positions. The three legionaries … rushed to the attack. The Soviets withdrew, leaving on the field 26 dead including two officers, while the three Norwegians met the death of heroes.'

After this last battle of 1942 the Christmas period passed relatively quietly for the Norwegians, and at this time new officers and volunteers arrived from Mitau. Among the former was Leg-Ostuf Frode Halle, a 36-year-old engineer and officer who had travelled extensively, and whose abilities had impressed the German staff of the replacement company in Norway; he would later assume command of the Legion's 1. Kompanie.

Leg-Uscha Per Meidell, the anti-tank gunner hero of the fighting at Krasny Bor on 10–11 February 1943. Officially, a German soldier was awarded the grades of the Iron Cross sequentially: in other words, he could not receive the 1st Class until he had already been awarded the 2nd Class. In exceptional circumstances, a previously undecorated soldier who was believed deserving of the 1st Class might be awarded both decorations (perhaps 'officially' on consecutive dates) for the same act of bravery. Here Per Meidell displays the newly awarded 2nd and 1st Class together, on 25 February 1943; note also that he wears the SS-runes collar patch. In all, seven members of the Norwegian Volunteer Legion were awarded the 1st Class Iron Cross and 120 the 2nd Class. (Wartime magazine *Fritt Folk*)

New Year battles

At the beginning of 1943 the Norwegian Legion returned to its old positions in the Gongosi sector where, between January and March, it would continue to be engaged in defensive fighting, at the cost of casualties including several officers. On 10 February, SS-Staf Fitzthum decorated posthumously Leg-Ustuf Nils Lande of 2. Kompanie, who had fallen on 13 January, with the Iron Cross 1st Class, and other Norwegians received the 2nd Class. On 14 February, Leg-Ostuf Einar Höve, commanding 3. Kompanie, fell in combat while attempting to neutralize a Soviet artillery position near Werch Kojrowo. On 20 February, the Polizei-Kompanie commander SS-Hstuf Lie was decorated with the Iron Cross 1st Class. On the 25th of that month a probationary officer, SS-Standartenoberjunker Hans Kristian Knudsen (an Austrian-born Norwegian veteran of the SS-Regt 'Der Führer' in SS-Div 'Das Reich') was killed shortly after graduating from Bad Tölz.

The anti-tank gunners at Mga and Krasny Bor

Operation 'Iskra' (Spark), the new Soviet two-pronged offensive in the north, started on 12 January 1943, and six days later the prongs would meet to create a land corridor through to besieged Leningrad. During this 'Second Battle of Lake Ladoga' the Norwegians formed part of SS-Brigaf Klingemann's 2. SS-Inf-Bde (together with Latvian battalions and the Netherlands and Flemish Legions), with on their right the Spanish 'Blue Division' (numbered 250th in the German order of battle). Together with the German 212. and 215. Inf-Divs, these came under Gen de Kav Kleffel's L Armee-Korps.

During the Legion's service on the Leningrad front it had provided sub-units to fight alongside other foreign volunteer or German units, and the anti-tank 14. Kompanie was often chosen. It was the most mobile element of the Legion, and at this time it had also received some French war-booty 75mm guns which were more effective against Soviet T-34 tanks than the 3.7cm 'door-knockers'.[3] On 15 January, SS-Brigaf Klingemann personally ordered that the anti-tank platoon of 4. Kompanie (presumably equipped with hand-held weapons such as AT rifle-grenades and the PzB 39 AT rifle), and another platoon taken from 13. Kompanie of the Netherlands Legion, be incorporated into 14. Kompanie, and that the reinforced company be assigned to the German 16. Polizei-Schützen-Regt (such Police combat units were habitually short of heavy weapons).

East of Leningrad, where the River Neva hooks north to flow into Lake Ladoga, the north-west tip of the German defences at the river's mouth was at Schlüsselburg. On 21 January a two-gun Norwegian section from 14. Kompanie, led by Leg-Hscha Hans Hang, was attached to a German unit which, together with Dutch volunteers, was defending a rail junction at Mga about 10km south of Schlüsselburg. One of the guns was commanded by Leg-Uscha Gunnar Thomle and the other by Leg-Uscha Roy Wentzel-Larsen. On 27 January the Soviets launched an attack with tanks and infantry preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment: one after another, Soviet tanks were knocked out by the precise fire of the Norwegian AT guns, while the heavy machine guns did great execution among the massed enemy infantry. At the end of this action only one Norwegian was reported as wounded, but the Soviet assaults would be repeated again and again over the days that followed; on 29 January Gunnar Thomle fell, but his crew kept his gun in action. During subsequent enemy attacks the entire crews of both guns were killed, but were replaced by other Norwegian volunteers, who enabled the section to remain in the line until 16 February.

Another anti-tank section with three guns, previously attached to the Latvian units of 2. SS-Inf-Bde, was assigned on 3 February to the Spanish 'Blue Division' in the Krasny Bor area, where it was made available to Col Sagrado's Regiment 262. On 10 February the Soviets launched an onslaught by three divisions south-eastwards from the Kolpino area towards the Krasny Bor sector east of Pushkin. The first Norwegians killed, while still reconnoitring suitable gun positions, were Leg-Ustuf Ludvik Lundemo and his aide Leg-Stmn Ernst Per Olsen.

3 Possibly the 7.5cm PaK 97/38, mounted on the carriage of the German 5cm PaK 38 and using captured French or Polish ammunition. Its HEAT round could penetrate the T-34 at short range, and even the KV-1 with shots from the side.

Full circle (see page 10): accompanied by Leg-Hstuf Quist, Quisling reviews the returned survivors of the Norwegian Volunteer Legion by the equestrian statue of King Karl Johan in Palace Square, Oslo, in early May 1943. (*Legionsminner*, 1943)

The first gun was commanded by Leg-Uscha Per Meidell, with ten Norwegians and a support squad of 16 Spanish soldiers. The initial Soviet attacks by infantry alone were badly mauled, but were immediately followed by a second wave with tank support, and the Spanish line collapsed under sheer weight of numbers. Meidell's group were delayed by the need to disable their gun before retreating, and a group of soldiers appeared behind them, dressed as Germans and calling to them in German. The suspicious Meidell approached them alone, and, recognizing that they were Russians, warned his men. Although wounded in the mouth he fired back, dropping several of the enemy; his group lost four Spaniards and one Norwegian in this firefight. After receiving first aid Meidell returned to try to serve his gun; this was soon damaged by a Soviet shell that killed two of his men, but it was still fireable, and Meidell kept it in action for some time. In the end, only he and Legionaries Rishovd and Gasmann escaped alive and without serious injury, and the latter was killed shortly afterwards while fighting alongside Spanish and German soldiers.

The crew of the second Norwegian AT gun, commanded by John Lind, were all given up for dead when overwhelmed by the morning attack on 10 February. Legions-Sturmann Brandsrud's crew fell back after destroying the third gun, but the lance-corporal was badly wounded during a subsequent rearguard action with a German company. His men finished up fighting in the streets of Krasny Bor village, where they actually managed to destroy a T-34 and take some enemy prisoners.

As the battle raged on, the Legion HQ – temporarily under the command of Jonas Lie in Leg-Stubaf Quist's absence – had to report that the anti-tank gunners had all been wiped out while serving their guns. A few days later Leg-Uscha Per Meidell was awarded both the 2nd and 1st Classes of the Iron Cross, the latter on 25 February 1943.

Homecoming and disbandment

Quist's absence was due to a trip to Berlin at the end of January 1943, to discuss with Himmler the SS-FHA's plans for the reorganization of the unit. Like the other European volunteer legions, it was going to be completely absorbed into the Waffen-SS in all respects, as part of a major programme of expansion and re-equipment including the formation of several new divisions. After the February fighting, rumours about imminent repatriation began to circulate in the Legion's ranks. There were still about a hundred new recruits waiting at Mitau, but the order for their transfer to the front never came. At the beginning of March the Legion was finally relieved from its positions, replaced by the Latvians of the 2. SS-Infanterie-Brigade.

On 5 March the last legionaries were gathered at Krasnoje Selo, where a ceremony was held to honour their fallen comrades. On 7 March most of them left for Mitau, while the Polizei-Kompanie were transferred directly to Norway. Once home, the volunteers were given two weeks' leave. At the beginning of May the Legion was re-assembled one last time in Oslo to take part in a ceremony in honour of the veterans, after which it was officially dissolved. The approximately 1,900 all ranks who had served in the Legion had suffered some 180 killed.

As mentioned above ('Summary of deployment'), about half of the former legionaries accepted the invitation to join the reorganized SS-Grenadier-Regiment 2 'Norge', which alongside the former Danish legionaries in SS-Gren-Regt 1 'Danmark' would serve in the new 11. SS-Panzergrenadier-Freiwilligen-Division 'Nordland'. In November 1943 the regimental title was changed to SS-PzGren-Regt 23 'Norge', and that of the division to 11. SS-Frw-PzGren-Div 'Nordland'. This formation would serve to the end under III (Germanisches) SS-Panzer-Korps, commanded by SS-Ogruf & Gen der Waffen-SS Felix Steiner.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Public archives

Bundesarchiv, Abt. VI, Berlin, Germany
Bundesarchiv – Militararchiv, Freiburg, Germany
Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Military Records Division
NorgesLexi (Bergen Museum)
Riksarkivet (National Archives of Norway)

Wartime publications

Fritt Folk, official journal of the Nasjonal Samling
Germaneren, organ of the Norwegian SS
Munin, general information weekly, 1941–45
Ragnarok, political monthly, 1939–45

Books

Legionsminner (Viking Forlag, Oslo 1943)
NS Arbok (Viking Forlag, 1944)
Finn Wigforss, *Krigens ansikt* (Oslo 1944)

Post-war works
Afiero, Massimiliano, *I volontari stranieri di Hitler* (Ritter Editrice)
Afiero, Massimiliano, *La Crociata contro il Bolscevismo: le legioni volontarie europee* (Marvia Edizioni)
Afiero, Massimiliano, *Den Norske Legion (*Associazione Culturale Ritterkreuz)
Arneberg, Sven T., *Legionærene: Nordmenn i skyttergravskrig ved Leningrad 1942–43* (Thorsrud Lokalhistorisk Forlag)
Bender, Roger James, & Hugh Page Taylor, *Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, Vol 3* (R. James Bender Publishing)
Brenden, Geir, & Tommy Natedal, *Norwegian Volunteers of the Waffen SS* (Helion & Company)
Forczyk, Robert, *Leningrad 1941–44,* Campaign 215 (Osprey Publishing)
Gozzoli, Marzio, *Popoli al bivio* (Ritter Editrice)
Halle, Frode, *Fra Finland til Kaukasus: Nordmenn pa östifronten 1941–1945* (Dreyers Forlag, Oslo)
Landwehr, Richard, *Frontfighters: the Norwegian Volunteer Legion of the Waffen SS, 1941–1943 (*Roger Hunt)
Littlejohn, David, *Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, Volume 1*: *Norway, Denmark, France (*R. James Bender Publishing)
Norling, Erik, *De los fiordos a las estepas: la legion SS noruega en el Frente del Este 1941–43* (Garcìa Hispàn Editor)
Schei, Derek M., & Geir Brenden, *Norske krigsfrivillige på tysk side*, 2 vols (Utmerkelser)
Ulateig, Egil, & Geir Brenden, *Nordmennene på Østfronten* (Forlaget Repartasje)

PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: *NASJONAL SAMLING & RIKSHIRD*

A1: *NS Fører* Vidkun Quisling; Oslo, 1941

Quisling wears the original double-breasted dark blue uniform of the NS with gilt buttons, bullion kepi cord and his unique shoulder-strap insignia, over a khaki-brown shirt and black necktie. The NS party badge on his cap, and in miniature on his left lapel, is a gold eagle over a gold-rimmed red disc with a gold St Olaf's cross (see central badge on Plate H6).

A2*: NS Sveitfører*, *Rikshird*, c. 1942

Officer of captain's rank in the NS paramilitary organization, wearing the later single-breasted tunic, with 'Sam Browne' belt. Ski trousers and laced boots were a common alternative to the breeches and riding boots. His shoulder straps of rank bear three gold bars; NCO ranks wore red bars and edging, privates red unit numbers and two or one German-style left sleeve chevrons. The Rikshird brassard on his left sleeve is black, with a circular yellow-on-red badge of St Olaf's Cross with vertical swords (compare with Plate H4). On his right sleeve is a gold chevron narrowly edged with red; obviously inspired by the German SS 'old fighter's chevron', it indicated membership of the NS before 9 April 1940.

Initially, the Hird provided strong-arm squads for street brawls with opposing militants, but during the war it significantly increased in size and became militarized. The bulk of the volunteers were organized in seven regional regiments, of which the 1st 'Viken' and 7th 'Viking' Regts were located in the Oslo region. Special units were also created, such as the *Førergarden* (Quisling's bodyguard company, figure A3); a regular *Hirdens Bedriftsvern* battalion, to protect industry from Allied or Resistance raids and sabotage; the *Hirdmarinen* naval and *Hirden Flykorpset* aviation sections; the *Kvinnehird* women's section (Plate G3), and schools for student officers and NCOs.

A3: *Hirdmann*, *Førergarden*; Oslo, late 1943

Presenting arms with a Rikshird flag in the background, this private is one of the 150 carefully selected volunteers who performed in rotation six months' full-time service at Quisling's two residences. Everyday service dress was a grey-green tunic and ski trousers. The left arm badge is a silver-on-black version of the NS eagle-and-cross, superimposed on a patch bearing a 'VQ' monogram, the latter repeated as a decal on the Norwegian M1931 steel helmet (a copy of the Swedish M1926). The rifle is a German Kar 98k with 84/98 bayonet. See photo on page 6 for insignia detail.

B: NORWEGIAN GERMANIC SS

B1: Volunteer, *Norske-SS*; Elverum, May–June 1941

When first formed under Jonas Lie, who in this context used the Norwegian rank of *SS-Standartfører,* the company selected from the 7th Rikshird Regt wore Waffen-SS field-grey sidecaps and matching uniform with the collar open over their khaki shirt and black tie, but retained their Hird ranking on SS shoulder straps, and their brassard. The field cap bore on the front a silver German *Totenkopf* button, and on the left side a silver-and-red NS eagle-and-cross badge. They wore no collar patches, but received belts with Waffen-SS buckles. After about 85 per cent of its original members left to join the Norwegian Volunteer Legion the remnant retained this uniform until September 1942, when the organization's status, title and uniform all changed.

B2: *SS-Lagfører*, *Germanske SS Norge*; Oslo, 1943

This NCO of the reorganized movement ordered into being by Quisling on 21 July 1942, of equivalent rank to SS-Scharführer, carries the Oslo company banner; its pseudo-runic motto is a Norwegian translation of that of the SS – 'My Honour is Loyalty'. This wholly National Socialist militarized organization, separate from the Nasjonal Samling but answering directly to Quisling, was modelled on the German Allgemeine-SS. The four-pocket tunic is worn with a black

Bergmütze and ski trousers, the former bearing only a cloth *Totenkopf* badge. The SS runes are displayed on a lozenge on the right sleeve; collar, shoulder straps of rank, and sleeve lozenge are edged in mixed silver-and-black cord piping. SS rank was worn on the left collar patch, and on the right a silver *Solhjulet* 'sunwheel' device (a circular presentation of the swastika). His left sleeve insignia are as figure B3.

B3: *SS-Neststormfører*, *Germanske SS Norge*; Oslo, 1943

This junior officer, equivalent to an SS-Untersturmführer, wears the same uniform as figure B2 except for his silver-edged three-pip left collar patch of rank, and the fact that all piping is plain silver only. High on his left sleeve he wears a silver and black version of the NS eagle-and-cross badge, and on his forearm a silver-on-black embroidered cuffband '*Germanske SS Norge*'.

C: *DEN NORSKE LEGION*, GERMANY

C1: Volunteer, August 1941

This is how the volunteers appeared when they first arrived in their training camp at Fallingbostel, north of Hanover, from the Truppenübungsplatz Bergen. He still wears his khaki NS shirt and black tie, with a German dark field-grey uniform lacking either collar patches or shoulder straps. His only insignia are a small Norwegian cockade on his German *Feldmütze*; the SS-pattern eagle-and-swastika left sleeve badge, and below it a small Norwegian flag patch; and his Waffen-SS belt buckle.

Striking portrait of a young volunteer of the Norwegian Legion. His mountain cap bears the regulation SS insignia, in the machine-woven manufacturing style of Bevo of Wuppertal: a *Totenkopf* on the front, and a small eagle-and-swastika on the left flap. On the right collar of his field-grey M1942/43 tunic is a rare example of the outwards-facing lion-and-axe patch. (Courtesy Hugh Page Taylor Collection)

C2: Barracks sign

Sign hand-painted by a Norwegian volunteer and fixed at the gates of the 1st 'Viken' Battalion's HQ in the Fallingbostel barracks complex**.** Between four St Olaf's Crosses, the lettering reads 'BATALJONSTABEN/ VIKEN BATALJON/ AV/ DEN NORSKE LEGION', against a triple-tailed streamer in national colours.

C3a & 3b: Trainee anti-tank gunner & instructor, 14. Kompanie

Working with a 3.7cm PaK 35/36 gun, both wear German M1940 steel helmets without insignia, and the denim cloth *Drillichanzug* used for all kinds of physical labour; this could vary in colour from off-white to mouse-grey. The only insignia worn on it are the shoulder straps and collar *Tresse* of the Unterscharführer instructor. Both wear standard-issue leather belts with M1911 rifle pouches, and the trainee wears around his body the strong webbing crossbelt with a sprung 'trail-hook' which was used for manhandling the gun on the battlefield.

C4: *Legions-Hauptscharführer*; Stettin, late 1942

This staff sergeant is one of a batch of replacements for the front line, taking his oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler 'for the fight against Bokshevism' before embarkation for Mitau in Latvia. His overcoat and insignia are of standard Waffen-SS patterns, except for the lion-and-axe right-hand collar patch which was now being distributed to members of the Norwegian Legion.

D: LENINGRAD FRONT, MARCH 1942

These men occupy a defensive position facing the Volkhov River, in the depths of the bitter winter of 1941/42 – thus qualifying them for the German *Ostmedaille* or 'Order of the Frozen Meat'.

D1: Runner

Inadequately equipped for the extreme cold – like the rest of the German forces on the Eastern Front – this legionary has only standard-issue woollen uniform and overcoat. The sole concessions to the freezing temperature are the tubular woollen 'toque' worn around his head and neck under his helmet, and woollen gloves. His helmet has a field-made white camouflage cover.

D2: Non-commissioned officer

This soldier has a non-regulation fleece- or fur-lined cap, and by far the most common snow-camouflage garment worn by the Legion. The long, loose-fitting buttoned coat with a big attached hood under the collar was worn over the helmet and overcoat. In front-line trenches it was common practice to carry a pistol (here a Walther P38) tucked into the belt rather than in its buckled holster. There was always a danger of sudden Soviet trench raids, and a holster was awkward to unfasten with cold, gloved fingers.

D3: Junior officer

This lieutenant wears the *Bergmütze* mountain cap which replaced the *Feldmütze* sidecap when the Legion was

Right-hand collar patch variants, as discussed under Plate H2.
(A) Regulation inwards-facing lion patch, machine embroidered. Note that the lion is not crowned, and the hind legs are spread apart. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)
(B) Outwards-facing crowned lion in zinc metal, 'slimmer' with hind legs superimposed, as reportedly worn by the Polizei-Kompanie. (Courtesy Rene Chavez Collection)
(C) Inwards-facing Norwegian lion in white metal, the axe presumably broken; this is an example of the metal badges reportedly hand-stitched to blank patches by early volunteers to the Legion. (Courtesy Hugh Page Taylor Collection)

shipped to Russia. It has the standard woven *Totenkopf* badge on the front of the crown and small eagle-and-swastika on the left-side flap; silver piping around the crown seam for commissioned ranks was not ordered until 3 October 1942. Sheepskin jackets were another popular non-regulation winter garment, and he has also acquired a pair of the Wehrmacht's excellent mountain boots. His over-uniform clothing is completed by a civilian scarf, and field-grey woollen ankle-warmers.

E: KRASNOJE SELO, SUMMER 1942

This imagined scene is set at the Legion's rear base behind the Leningrad front, with legionaries posing for a snapshot around a military traffic-direction post.

E1: *Legions-Untersturmführer*

This 'Leg-Ustuf' (the most junior commissioned rank – second lieutenant) wears everyday field-grey service uniform with full insignia and decorations, though he has other-ranks' trousers and marching boots. He displays standard Waffen-SS insignia on his *Bergmütze*, the shoulder straps and left collar patch of this rank, and the left sleeve eagle; his right collar patch bears the Norwegian lion-and-axe badge (see Plate H2 for unpiped other-ranks' version). The circular silver and black St Olaf's Cross-and-swords patch on his left forearm marks him as a member of the Rikshird; below this he wears the all-ranks' cuffband '*Frw. Legion Norwegen*' (see Plate H4 & H3). He sports the ribbon of the Iron Cross 2nd Class in his buttonhole, and on his left breast a small gold-and-red metal NS membership badge and the German Infantry Assault Badge. His holstered Walther is worn on a Norwegian officer's field belt.

E2: *Legions-Unterscharführer*

Just back from a local patrol and wearing light field kit, this NCO has received – like figure E3 – the first-model reversible Waffen-SS camouflage helmet cover and collarless oversmock in what collectors term the '*Platanenmuster*' or 'plane-tree pattern', worn with the 'spring/summer' side outwards. Its open neck exposes his tunic collar, edged with the silver *Tresse* braid that distinguished German NCOs from this grade upwards, and with his single-pip rank patch on his left (this rank may equate to a British lance-sergeant – there were more German NCO grades than in the Allied hierarchies). On his right he wears a conventional SS-rune patch; photos of the Norwegian Legion at the front show that this, a blank black patch, and the lion-and-axe design were all in simultaneous use. As a squad leader he carries binoculars, a map case, and an MP40 sub-machine gun with its canvas triple magazine pouches.

E3: *Legions-Schütze*

This private soldier, with his Kar 98k slung, shows the rear of the standard German infantry rifleman's field equipment: the gasmask canister, rolled Waffen-SS pattern *Zeltbahn* (poncho/tent section), breadbag (haversack), mess tin, and felt-insulated water bottle with cup.

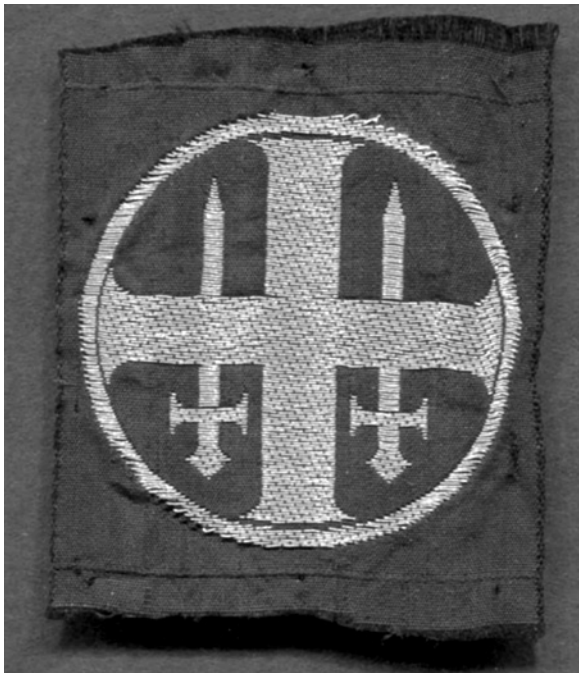
F: PERSONALITIES

F1: *Legions-Sturmbannführer* Arthur Quist, summer 1942

Major Quist or 'Qvist' (1896–1973) was a cavalry officer and early member of the Nasjonal Samling, who commanded the Legion from December 1941 to May 1943. Quisling then promoted him lieutenant-colonel (although the Norwegian Army no longer existed), and he performed various Rikshird staff duties until 1945; after the war a Norwegian court sentenced him to ten years' imprisonment. His German Army M1935 tunic with a dark green collar bears the interwoven silver cord shoulder straps of this rank, on double underlay of infantry-white over black, and the silver-piped officers' pattern of the lion-and-axe right collar patch. The four-pip Stubaf's rank patch on his left and the left sleeve insignia are exactly as figure F2.

F2: *SS-Sturmbannführer* Jonas Lie, spring 1943

Jonas Lie (1899–1945), a former soldier and a political rival of Quisling, was a man who 'wore several hats' simultaneously. Although he held senior rank in the Rikshird he fought against the German invasion in April 1940, but became Minister of Police in Quisling's 1942 government. As a pre-war acquaintance of Heinrich Himmler, he was also appointed



The silver and black Rikshird forearm badge, as Plate H4. (Courtesy Rene Chavez Collection)

head of his country's fledgling Germanic SS; and in spring 1941 he had been commissioned a captain in the Waffen-SS when he accompanied the 'Liebstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler' on the Balkan front (thus his SS-rune collar patch). In 1942–43 he commanded the Polizei-Kompanie of the Legion in combat; he was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class in February 1943, and deputized for Leg-Stubaf Quist during his absence from the front. After further ministerial service, he died of natural causes on 11 May 1945. Here he displays on his left sleeve the SS eagle-and-swastika, the silver and black Rikshird badge, and the cuffband '*Frw. Legion Norwegen*'.

F3: *Legions-Unterscharführer* Nicolay von Weymarn, March 1942

Born in Finland of German-Swedish stock, he was taken to Norway after the Soviet Revolution; later joining the NS and its Rikshird, he was one of the first volunteers to join the Legion. He wears the *Bergmütze* with a white knitted wool cover fitting over the peak, and his open snow-camouflage coat reveals his tunic collar bearing lion and single-pip patches but lacking NCO *Tresse*; his holstered pistol is a P38.

The *Frontkjempermerket* ('Front Fighter's Badge'), introduced in October 1943 for volunteers who served on the Eastern Front; see also under Plate H7. The silver badge was created by the famous Norwegian designer Axel Holmsen, and produced by the Oslo company Webeto. This is an example of the second of two qualities that are known; the first has slightly crisper details, and the 'M' of 'KJEMPER' has more rounded corners. The badge is attached by a hinged vertical steel pin on the back, where the lower right corner of the frame bears '830' or '830 S' indicating the silver content of the alloy, followed by the manufacturer's mark 'W'. A known example with '935' centred on the reverse just below the shield may be of post-war manufacture. (Courtesy Rene Chavez Collection)

Von Weymarn distinguished himself during the Soviet night attack of 21/22 March 1942, but was killed during Leg-Hstuf Berg's failed fighting patrol on 15/16 April.

F4: *Legions-Hauptsturmführer* Ragnar Berg, March 1942

Emerging from his 4. Kompanie command post, Capt Berg wears the same clothing without visible rank insignia. He was previously a member of the Norwegian Germanic SS who, rather than being inspired by the usual feelings of solidarity with Finland, was the personification of the politically motivated Waffen-SS officer. He was killed during his failed attempt to destroy three Soviet bunkers in the Uritsk sector on the night of 15/16 April 1942, when his men suffered 90 per cent casualties.

G: FEMALE AUXILIARIES; MITAU, SUMMER 1942

G1: Nurse, walking-out dress

Mitau in Latvia was the location of the Legion's main rear Lazarett (evacuation hospital), but nurses later served at the Legion's forward bases, where they suffered casualties. This interesting field-grey tunic – worn with a matching *Bergmütze*, straight skirt, khaki shirt and black tie – has brass Norwegian buttons (including three small ones at the rear of the cuff), and breast pockets only. The apparently large left skirt pocket is actually a bag made of uniform cloth; fastened with a zipper along the top, it is made with a false flap and pleat to resemble a pocket, and is worn slung from the leather belt. The cap might be seen worn without insignia; with the small Waffen-SS eagle on the left flap, as illustrated; or with the eagle on the front of the crown and a German mountain-troops' *Edelweiss*

badge on the left. No collar patches were worn, but she sports the enamelled NS membership badge on her left breast pocket; the standard SS eagle and Norwegian flag patch are sewn to the upper left sleeve, and a Geneva Cross brassard is fixed around the forearm. The high boots are something of an affectation for walking-out, and laced low shoes were normally worn.

G2: Nurse, ward dress

Norwegian volunteer nurses were integrated into the Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (DRK: German Red Cross), and this sister – perhaps bringing a birthday bunch of flowers to a friend? – wears its ward uniform of a light grey-and-white striped dress with white collar, 'veil' cap, apron, stockings and shoes. At her throat is the DRK brooch, and around her left upper arm the white brassard bearing a red cross surrounded by the black-printed title 'Deutsches/ Rotes/ Kreuz' (see MAA 393, *World War II German Women's Auxiliary Services*, photo page 35).

G3: Welfare assistant, *Kvinnehird*

Members of the Hird female section who volunteered as social welfare workers, to assist the clinical staff with the non-medical needs of convalescent patients, wore this striking green uniform with a yellow shirt and black tie. The NS eagle-and-cross badge in brass and red is worn on the left of the sidecap. Stitched to the left sleeve is a white lozenge bearing the yellow-and-red St Olaf's Cross without the addition of the usual two swords. A small enamelled version, bearing the flanking letters 'K' and 'H' for Kvinnehird in gold on white, is pinned above the left breast pocket.

Nearly 400 Norwegian nurses volunteered for military service, and of these at least 20 were recorded as killed or missing. For this field-grey service and walking-out uniform, see under Plate G1; note the large uniform-cloth bag slung from her belt on the left hip. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

H: FLAGS & INSIGNIA

H1: Main flag of the Norwegian Legion, with gold lettering on the national flag design. In photos it appears to measure roughly 1.3m (4ft 3in) in the fly. The finial for both this and H5 was an angular gilded spearhead, with two hanging tasselled cords in gold.

H2: Official design of the Legion's embroidered right-hand collar patch, NCOs' and troops' version. Variants – with the lion facing to the left as viewed, crowned or uncrowned, and in white metal – are still the subjects of research and discussion. For instance, according to Richard Landwehr (*Frontfighters: the Norwegian Volunteer Legion of the Waffen-SS 1941–1943,* pages 24–25), an applied metal lion appeared from the early months of the Legion's formation. Initially Norwegian volunteers were given plain black right-hand collar patches because they were not eligible for the SS runes. Consequently, many of them began to apply a Norwegian metal lion, hand-stitched in place if necessary. Moreover, some sources state that the metal lion worn by the members of the Police Company faced left as viewed, in the opposite direction to that worn by the rest of the Legion; but yet others report that lion badges facing in either direction were to be seen throughout the Legion and the Police Company.

H3: The official German cuffband approved on 3 October 1941, but not generally distributed for almost a year. This replaced earlier unauthorized cuffbands lettered '*Den Norske Legion*' or '*Legion Norwegen*'.

H4: Silver and black badge worn only by members of the Nasjonal Samling Rikshird and the Police Company, on the left forearm.

H5: Guidon of 1. Bataljon 'Viken', the original core of the Legion. In photos it appears to measure roughly 0.75m (2ft 6ins) in the hoist. On the reverse it bore in gold the lettering ALT FOR NORGE ('Everything for Norway'), and the names of five battles fought against Sweden in 1808–14 by a unit of this name.

H6: Apparently about the same size as H5, the flag of the Police Company bore in the centre the badge of the police force that emerged from Quisling's purge of the former *Statspoliti* in July 1941.

H7: The *Frontkjempermerket* ('Front Fighter's Badge') created by Quisling in October 1943 for all personnel who served on the Eastern Front – including, retrospectively, members of the former Norske Legion. The silver badge, worn high on the left breast, was regarded as a decoration, being accompanied by a presentation certificate signed by Quisling and other members of the government. Veterans wore a miniature version as a jacket lapel pin. See also photo caption opposite.

INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** refer to illustrations and their captions.

1st 'Viken' Battalion 10–11, **10**, **11**
11. SS-Freiwilligen-Panzergrenadier-Division 'Nordland' 4–5, 42
14th Anti-Tank Co 11, 13, **C3**(**27**, 44), 37, **37**, **39**, 40–41
122. Infanterie-Division 21, 33

Allgemeine-SS 7
anti-tank guns **21**, **C3**(**27**, 44), **38**, 40
Army Group North 16

Bad Tölz **23**, 34–35
Bakke, Legions-Sturmbannfuhrer Jorgen **10**, 11, 12–13, 13
barracks sign **C2**(**27**, 44)
Berg, Leg-Hstuf Ragnar 11, 21–22, **F4**(**30**, 46)
Berger, Gottlob 8
Berlin, battle of 5
Braseth, Lt John 11, 36
Brun, Capt Henrik 11

casualties 3, 18–19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 33, 36–37, 39, 40, 42
central staff 10
Christmas, 1942 39
collar patches **3**, **5**, **6**, **8**, **10**, **12**, 15, **22**, **C1**(**27**, 44), **E1**(**29**, 45), **F1**(**30**, 45), **H2**(**32**, 47), 35–36, **39**, **44**, **45**
commanders 10, 13
communications teams 21
cuffbands **3**, 8, 15, **23**, **24**, **E1**(**29**, 45), **F2**(**30**, 46), **H3**(**32**, 47)
Czechoslovakia 5

Dahlen, Leg-Ustuf Per 38
Dahm, SS-Hstuf Erich Friedrich 13
Damsleth, Harald 4
Denmark 6, 8
deployment 4–5
disbandment 4, 42

Eastern Front 3, 7, 12–13, **14**, 15–16, **16**, **19**, **20**, **33**, **35**
  deployment by air 16–17
  Gongosi sector 24, 33, 38–39, 39–41
  infantry probe, 21 March, 1942 18–19
  Leningrad front 4, 16–23, **17**, **21**, **D**(**28**, 44–45), **34**, 40
  Operation 'Iskra' (Spark) 40–41
  patrol warfare 21–23
  recognition 23–24
  reconnaissance patrols 18
  traffic-direction post **E**(**29**, 45)
  Uritsk sector **17**, 20–23
  Volhov River front 16–20, **17**, **D**(**28**, 44–45)
  winter battles, 1942–43 36–41, **37**, **38**, **39**
equipment 8, **E3**(**29**, 45)
Ersatz-Bataillon 33

Fallingbostel camp 11, **12**, 13
female staff 36, 43, **G**(**31**, 46–47), **47**
Finson, Leg-Hstuf 24
Finssoe Kojrowa 20
Fizthum, SS-Ostubaf 36, 37, 39
flag patch **12**, 14, **C1**(**27**, 44)
flags **11**, **19**, **A3**(**25**, 43), **H1**(**32**, 47), **H5–6**(**32**, 47), 36
Førergarden **6**, **A3**(**25**, 43), 43
formation 7, 8–10, 15
Freikorps Danmark 24
Freiwilligen Legionen 7–8
Frontkjempermerket ('Front Fighter's Badge') **H7**(**32**, 47), **46**
Fuglesand, Jörgen **20**, 24, 33
funding 4, **4**

German personnel 12
German-Norwegian relations 24
Germanske SS Norge 7, **8**, 46

Haakon, King 6
Halle, Leg-Ostuf Frode 39
Hang, Leg-Hscha Hans 40
headgear
  Feldmütze **C1**(**27**, 44)
  field caps **7**
  helmets **A3**(**25**, 43), **D1**(**28**, 44), **E2**(**29**, 45)
  mountain cap **16**, **22**, **D3**(**28**, 44–45), **E1**(**29**, 45), **F3**(**30**, 46), **44**
  officers **10**, **D3**(**28**, 44–45), **E1**(**29**, 45)
  sidecaps **7**, **22**, **23**, **B1**(**26**, 43)
  winter **16**, **D2**(**28**, 44)
Hetland, Rasmus 37
Himmler, Heinrich 6–7, 8, 16, **24**, 42, 45
Hitler, Adolf 6
Holter, Karl 39

insignia **5**, 7, **7**, 8, 14–15, **14**
Iron Cross awards **3**, 7, **14**, **15**, 19, **19**, 21, 23–24, 24, 36, 37, 39, **39**, 41

Jeckeln, Gen Friedrich 17
Jöntvedt, Leg-Uscha 22
Jüttner, SS-Brigadefuhrer Hans 11, 12–13, 34

Kahrs, Leg-Ustuf Sophus **20**
Kjelstrup, Col Finn Hanibal 4, 10, 11, 12–13, 13
Kleffel, Gen der Kav Philipp 33
Klingemann, SS-Brigaf Gottfried 33
Krasnoje Selo 18, **E**(**29**, 45), 36, 38, 42
Krasny Bor, action at **39**, 40–41
Kvinnehird **23**
Kvinnehird women's section **G3**(**31**, 47), 43

Lake Ladoga, Second Battle of 40
Latvian labourers 21
liaison staff 4, 12
Lie, Jonas 7, **8**, **24**, **F2**(**30**, 45–46), 36, 38–39, 41, 43
Lindbom, Legionary 22–33
Ljungberg, Leg-Ustuf 22–23

medical services 13, 23, **G1–2**(**31**, 46–47), **47**
Meidell, Leg-Uscha Per **39**, 41
Mga, action at 40

Nasjonal Samling movement 3–4, **3**, 5–6, 7, 11, **A**(**25**, 43)
national tensions 12–13
NCOs 12, **12**, **14**, **22**, **B2**(**26**, 43–44), **C4**(**27**, 44), **D2**(**28**, 44), **E2**(**29**, 45)
Nesheim, *Regimentefører* Aslak Rönning 7, 11
Netherlands Legion 33–34, 38, 39, 40
Nielsen, Legionary Lars 19–20
Norges-SS/*Norske-SS* 7, **7**, **B**(**26**, 43–44)
Norway, invasion and occupation 3–4, 6
Norwegian Navy 6
Norwegian Post Office 4, **4**
Norwegian press 8–10
Norwegian volunteers 8, **C1**(**27**, 44), **44**
nurses **G1–2**(**31**, 46–47), **47**

oath of loyalty 7, **11**, 13, **C4**(**27**, 44)
officers **3**, 4, 10, **10**, 12, **A2**(**25**, 43), **B3**(**26**, 44), **D3**(**28**, 44–45), **E1**(**29**, 45), 39
official language 11–12
Operation Barbarossa 4, 8
Operation 'Weserübung' 6
Opsahl, Leg-Ustuf 39
order of battle 13–14
organization 10–11, 11–12
Oslo 6, 7, **9**, 10, **10**, 42
Østring, SS-Untersturmfuhrer Bjorn **3**, 11, 23, 24, 35

Pan-Germanism 7
Polizei-Kompanie **24**, **H6**(**32**, 47), 35–36, 37, 39, 42
propaganda 7, **8**
Pushkin 17

Quisling, Vidkun 3–4, 5–6, 6, **6**, 7, 8, 8–9, **9**, 10, 13, **19**, 24, **A1**(**25**, 43), 36
Quist, Maj Arthur 4, 13, 15, **15**, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, **F1**(**30**, 45), 42

rank insignia 15, **B3**(**26**, 44), **E1–2**(**29**, 45), **F1**(**30**, 45)
recruitment 4, 7–8, 8, **9**, 13
Red Army 16, 18–19, 36–39
Red Ruin, the 23
reinforcement battalion 13
reinforcements 20, 33, 37
repatriation 42
resignations 10
Riga 17
Rikshird badge **3**, 7, 14–15, **23**, **24**, **F2**(**30**, 46), **H4**(**32**, 47), **46**
Rödseth, Alf 19
Rosenberg, Alfred 6
Russo-Finnish Winter War 4, 10

Siniavino salient **34**
ski battalion 15–16
SS Regiment 'Nordland' 8
SS runes **5**, **B**(**26**, 44), **E2**(**29**, 45), **F2**(**30**, 46), **H2**(**32**, 47), **39**
SS-Division 'Germania' 8
SS-Division 'Wiking' 5, 8, 12, 13, 33
SS-Fuhrungs-Hauptamt 8, 11, 15, 33, 34
SS-Kampfgruppe Jeckeln **15**, 17, 33
SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment 23 'Norge' 4–5, 42
Stephanson, Capt Carl 36
strength 12, 33
survivors 5
Sveen, Lt Karsten 11
Sweden 3

Terboven, Reichskommissar Josef 3, 6, 8–9, **9**, 33
Thomle, Leg-Uscha Gunnar 40
Totenkopf units 33
training 4, 7, 10, **10**, 11, **12**, 16, **C**(**27**, 44), 36
Trondrud, Leg-Uscha 22

uniforms 7, **7**, 8, 10, 14
  coats **33**
  facings **8**
  fatigue **12**
  Kvinnehird **23**
  Nasjonal Samling movement **A2**(**25**, 43)
  Norges-SS/*Norske-SS* **B1**(**26**, 43)
  officers **3**, **10**, **D3**(**28**, 44–45), **E1**(**29**, 45)
  oversmocks **E2**(**29**, 45)
  parkas **34**
  sheepskin jackets **16**, **D3**(**28**, 45)
  ski trousers **B2**(**26**, 43–44)
  snow-camouflage **D2**(**28**, 44), **F3**(**30**, 46), **35**
  tunics **8**, **12**, **B2**(**26**, 43–44), **F1**(**30**, 45)
Uritsk 20

Valentinsen, Legionary John Adolf 19
Vestad, Leg-Ostuf 22

Waffen-SS 8, 11
Wang, Per 11, 23
war correspondents 13, 39
weapons
  Hotchkiss machine guns **16**
  MG34 **16**
  MP40 **E2**(**29**, 45), **16**
  pistols **D2**(**28**, 44), **F3**(**30**, 46)
  rifles **A3**(**25**, 43), **E3**(**29**, 45)
Wehrmacht 8
Wehrmacht High Command 8
Wentzel-Larsen, Leg-Uscha Roy 40
Weymarn, Leg-Uscha Nicolay von 23, **F3**(**30**, 46)
Wraal, Captain Frithjof Sverre 11

OSPREY PUBLISHING
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd

First published in Great Britain in 2019

© Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB 9781472834393; eBook 9781472834386; ePDF 9781472834379; XML 9781472834409

Editor: Martin Windrow
Maps by the author
Index by Alan Rutter
Typeset by PDQ Digital Media Solutions, Bungay, UK

Title page: Norwegian volunteer manning defensive position on the Leningrad front, spring 1942. By this time the Legion had received Waffen-SS camouflage smocks and helmet covers, but their armament was still rather mixed: note that he is manning a captured French M1914 Hotchkiss machine gun. (Wartime magazine *Munin*)

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

To find out more about our authors and books, visit **www.ospreypublishing.com**. Here you will find extracts, author interviews, details of forthcoming events, and the option to sign up for our newsletter.

Author's Note & Acknowledgements

The idea for this book was born years ago, when I found a copy of the book *Legionsminner* ('Memories of the Legion') by Christiansen Furum and E. Jul, printed in Oslo in 1943 by Viking Editions Forlag, on behalf of the *Nasjonal Samling* propaganda office. To retrace the operational history of the unit I have referred mainly to archival documents and wartime publications, but also to published works, especially those of Erik Norling (who has kindly drafted the Introduction to this text) and Geir Brenden. Most of the photos, unless otherwise specified, were taken from *Legionsminner.* Others were obtained from the US National Archives, or come from the private collections of the author and of Erik Norling, Rene Chavez and Hugh Page Taylor. I take this opportunity to thank them, and the other friends and collaborators who have generously contributed to this new work, in particular Stefano Canavassi, Ralph Riccio and Lorenzo Silvestri.

Artist's Note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the publisher. All enquiries should be addressed to:

ramirobujeiro@gmail.com

The publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

On page 3
SS-Untersturmführer (second lieutenant) Björn Østring in 1943, after graduating from the Waffen-SS officers' academy at Bad Tölz in Bavaria. In 1941–42 Østring was a Legions-Hauptscharführer (roughly, sergeant-major) commanding 3. Zug (3rd Platoon) of the Legion's 1. Kompanie. He was decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class on 10 May 1942 after distinguishing himself in a night battle on 22 April. Since officers bought their own uniforms, their silver-piped version of the Norwegian Volunteer Legion's lion-and-axe right collar patch is more consistently seen in photos than the troops' version (see Plate H2). Just visible on his left forearm are the *Rikshird* badge above the Legion's cuffband (see Plate H4 & H3). Both circular badges on his breast pocket show the St Olaf's Cross with swords of the *Nasjonal Samling* movement, the upper one in gold-and-red enamel. His ribbons are those of the Iron Cross above the *Ostmedaille* for Russian Front service in winter 1941/42. (Courtesy Erik Norling Collection)